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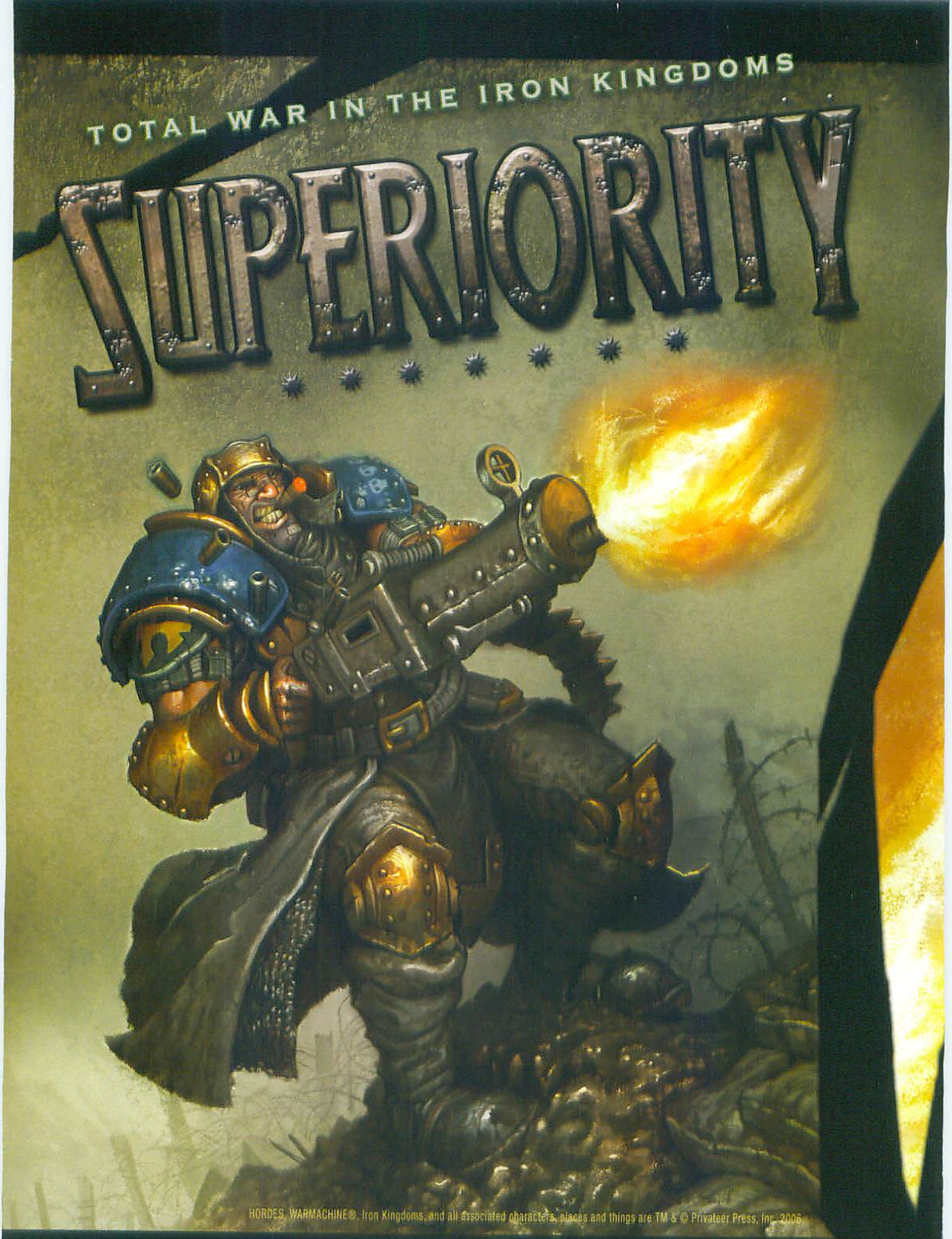
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ADVENTURES

14 SIEGE OF THE SPIDER EATERS
Tim and Eileen Connors
The village of Haven-Fara has a problem—it's been overrun with spiders that have been forced out of their nearby lair. Yet could this spider problem be merely a symptom of something worse to come? A D&D adventure for 1st-level characters.

36 TEALPECK'S FLOOD
Peter Vinogradov
Decades ago, the powerful wizard Tealpeck made a blood pact with the pit fiend Ibex. Now, someone must find a way to undo this folly before Tealpeck's lone descendant inherits a terrible fate. A D&D adventure for 6th-level characters.

60 MAN FOREVER
Jason Nelson-Brown
Lord Samulbrar gave up the adventuring life for that of a noble, yet something still haunts him from those early glory days. Rumors that he's actually a vampire have set the region on edge, and civil unrest now threatens a revolt that could devastate southern Impiltur. A Forgotten Realms adventure for 15th-level characters.

ON THE COVER

James Ryman shows us an aranea relaxing in her natural habitat.

"I will drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall neither night nor day
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man forbid:
Weary se'nnights nine times nine
Shall he dwindle, peak and pine:
Though his bark cannot be lost,
Yet it shall be tempest-tost."

Shakespeare
Macbeth
Act I, Scene 3

CARTOONS

34 The Portent
82 Mt. Zogon
96 Downer

COLUMNS

8 Editorial
12 Prison Mail
84 Gamer Guide
86 Dungeoncraft

CAMPAIGN WORKBOOK

90 The Dungeon
92 The Journey
94 Critical Threat

DUNGEON ADVENTURE PLAYER REWARDS!

Take advantage of the RPGA's Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of *Dungeon*! Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 9/30/06.

RPGA NETWORK

Drop by rpga.com for more details, and use the following adventure codes:
Siege of the Spider Eaters (137SE1DN)
Tealpeck's Flood (137TF1DN)
Man Forever (137MF1DN)

LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

When former *Dungeon* Editor-in-Chief Christopher Perkins heard that I'd be taking over the helm of this magazine way back in issue #103, he told me to cherish my tenure as long as it lasted. "It's the best job in the gaming industry," he said, and back in the fall of 2003 I had no idea how right he was. Thirty-five issues and three years later, I stand at the precipice of the magazine's 20th anniversary with a great deal of pride regarding what we've accomplished in *Dungeon*. As I write this I look at the 2006–2007 editorial calendar, I know how the new Savage Tide Adventure Path will begin and end, and I can tell you the names of the next great "undiscovered" authors that will be published in these pages. Chris was right. Running *Dungeon* is the best job in the game industry.

I'm going to miss it. A lot.

Next month's oversized 20th anniversary issue will be my last as *Dungeon's* editor-in-chief. Some of you may have noticed that a new title appeared by my name on the masthead a few months ago: publisher. As Paizo's publisher, I've been tasked with managing the business operation of *Dragon* and *Dungeon* magazines, to look for ways to increase circulation, to improve coordination of editorial content, and to integrate the magazines with the other exciting developments going on at Paizo Publishing.

I'd love to continue editing this magazine forever. I'm enormously proud of what we've accomplished in the last three years, thanks in no small part to *Dungeon's* top-flight editorial and art staffs, led by Managing Editor James Jacobs and Senior Art Director Sean Glenn. James ascends the *Throne of the Gods* with issue #139, which is set to contain the first installment of the Savage Tide Adventure Path 12-adventure monthly series. James was the primary architect of the astounding Savage Tide outline, and I know that he will bring the same intensity to his role as the magazine's editor-in-chief. James has been an invaluable resource and a great friend since my very first issue, and believe me when I tell you there are no better hands on the face of this or any other world to take over *Dungeon*. The rest of our art and editorial staff will continue to pour their hearts into this magazine each and every month, and I don't plan on pulling my fingers out of the pie entirely. As publisher I maintain a good deal of influence over the magazine's direction and contents (and I'll still be editing *Dragon*). If you like where we've been going since the editorial "relaunch" in #114 (and based on a recent reader survey, 97% of you do), you'll love what we have planned for the next few years.

Editing *Dungeon* has been an absolute joy. I wish I could do it forever, but there are new challenges and experiences ahead. Check out *Dragon* magazine to see what we're cooking up for your Savage Tide players, and if you're still running the Age of Worms, do me a favor and take out a few PCs with the nasty stuff we designed for you. Do it for old time's sake.

I thank you for letting me help you run your campaigns, and I hope that this magazine always has a place at your gaming table. We'll talk once more in next issue's editorial, and I may drop by from time to time to reveal big plans for the magazines, more plots involving explosion dogs, or random thoughts about gaming.

Be sure to pick up the oversized *Dungeon* #138 to celebrate 20 years of *Dungeon* in style. We'll return to the Mud Sorcerer's Tomb, take up another Challenge of Champions, find out what happens when a bunch of *Dungeon* contributors team-pitch an adventure at a Gen Con seminar, and once again visit Richard Pett's brilliant "Styes" setting. If that issue's any indicator, *Dungeon's* future will be very bright, with or without Erik Mona as its editor-in-chief.

It had better be, because the folks who will put it together will still have to answer to me.

ERIK

Erik Mona
Editor-in-Chief
erikm@paizo.com

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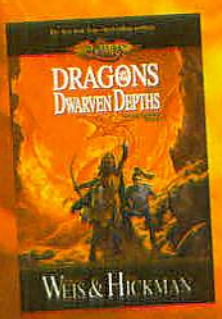

Dragons of the Dwarven Depths:
The Lost Chronicles, Volume I

DragonLance®

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Check out the *Dungeon* messageboards at paizo.com/dungeon

DUNGEON #134

SLAY THE ORIGINAL UNDEAD DRAGON!
DUNGEON
BEHOLD THE KING IN YELLOW!
GIANT BEETLES • DERRO • APOCALYPSE GOLEMS
MONTE COOK'S DUNGEONCRAFT • DOWNER • MT. ZOGON

Dragotha finally graces the cover of *Dungeon*! Look at his majesty! Dragotha, of course, played the role of villain in this issue's installment of the Age of Worms: "Into the Wormcrawl Fissure," where his stat block promptly entered the running for "deadliest monster ever published in the magazine." As an amusing aside, issue 134 of *Dragon* also featured this loveable undead dragon. We've been planning that feat of synchronicity since the start. No, really!

This issue also featured the first *Dungeon* adventure to make direct reference to the popular Cthulhu Mythos invented by H.P. Lovecraft. Matthew Hope's "And Madness Followed" threw the PCs up against the minions of Hastur and the horrors of Carcosa. Have you found the Yellow Sign?

After these two grim and gritty adventures, Michael Kortes's "Home Under the Range" was a breath of fresh air. As fresh as a romp through the Underdark hearding dozens of giant beetles can be, in any event.

Back issues of *Dungeon* #134 and dozens of other great issues are available at paizo.com.

Prison Mail

Age of Hardcovers

First off, I must sincerely congratulate and thank you guys at Paizo for the wonderful *Shackled City* Adventure Path. Amongst numerous gamers, it appears to be a "critical hit." I purchased the hardcover for the campaign and have been running it for several months now. My group has really enjoyed the campaign so far. I have really liked the condensed layout of the adventure path in one large hardcover book. I've had a subscription to *Dungeon* for several years now and I own all the issues containing the "Age of Worms" Adventure Path. I've read every single adventure in the current Path to get a feel for how the campaign is run (as I'm going to run it after *Shackled City* is done). I also feel the small tidbits you guys put in *Dragon* to assist the PCs and help flesh out the campaign were a great idea.

Now I'm sure you've been asked this quite a bit, but I really must know. I'm just wondering if you guys will also make a hardcover version of the entire "Age of Worms" Adventure Path? Will it contain all the "Wormfood" articles from *Dragon*? Any expected release date, if there is going to be a hardcover?

Ryan (Ogre-Bane)
Via Email

We currently have no release date for a hardcover edition of "Age of Worms," but that shouldn't be too much of a surprise since we've only recently finished printing the original 12 adventures in the magazine. Shackled City *released in the sum-*

NEXT MONTH IN DUNGEON

URBAN DECAY

by Amber E. Scott

In the back alleys and sewers, a wererat plots the overthrow of the humans he despises. A D&D adventure for 2nd-level characters.

THE WEAVERS

by Richard Pett

An opportunistic kenku threatens the Styes with a swarm of dangerous spiders, but his plans go horribly awry when the keepers of his stolen spiders come to collect. A D&D adventure for 10th-level characters.

THE MUD SORCERER'S TOMB

by Mike Shel

Brave the notorious traps and harrowing monsters of the Mud Sorcerer's Tomb! Fully updated, this classic *Dungeon* D&D adventure is for 14th-level characters.

CHALLENGE OF CHAMPIONS VI

by Jonathan Richards

The annual adventurers' guild competition returns to the pages of *Dungeon*. A D&D adventure for all characer levels.

PLUS!

An extensive Savage Tide sneak preview, a Downer Critical Threat, and a complete index of every adventure ever published in *Dungeon*!

mer of 2005, about eight months after the last adventure appeared in Dungeon, and honestly, that was a pretty grueling schedule. We also need to secure permission from Wizards of the Coast to publish any hardcover compilation products, and have to pace ourselves with these products so we're not overwhelming the staff with too many products at once. If and when we do release "Age of Worms" in hardcover, you can probably expect to see the additional content in the "Wormfood" articles, along with some all-new content, as part of the package.

Savage Tide Preview, Please!

I am very pleased with your work concerning the previous Adventure Paths and am considering purchasing a subscription to *Dungeon* for Savage Tide, but after reading the various postings on your message boards I am even more confused than ever concerning the overall thematic development.

Before I go diving in, do you have a synopsis you can share regarding whether you are developing Savage Tide's themes to focus primarily on pirates, the Isle of Dread, dinosaurs, or sahuagin prior to the Abyss, or all of the above?

I certainly understand if you can't provide excessive details, but the postings on the message board are very misleading (one of the reasons I'm writing you directly). I realize how busy you must be so I won't bother you again, just love what you're doing with *Dungeon* and am considering getting back into the swing of things after a long hiatus from gaming.

Mark Evans
Via Email

Of the twelve adventures that comprise the Savage Tide Adventure Path, four take place on the Isle of Dread. The themes of piracy, prehistoric monsters, demonic foes, and aquatic perils certainly carry over to the other adventures, and as a result you can expect to see something along these lines in all twelve adventures. Look for a more in-depth preview of the Savage Tide Adventure Path next issue, including concept art and a breakdown of each of the twelve adventures in the campaign.

NEXT MONTH IN DRAGON

CORE BELIEFS: PELOR

by Sean K Reynolds

Bring Pelor's healing light to the darkest reaches of your campaign with this in-depth look at the god of the sun.

IMPILTUR: THE FORGOTTEN KINGDOM

by George Krashos

No kingdom sleeps quietly in the FORGOTTEN REALMS. Learn what heroism shaped this country's war-ravaged past, what plots threaten its current tenuous peace, and who guards its uncertain future.

THREE DRAGON READINGS

by Craig Shackleton

Cast the fate of your character with this innovative system using the Three Dragon Ante deck.

GAMES OF CHANCE

by Seth Irvin Williams

New card and dice games for you and your character.

PLUS!

The Ecology of the Rust Monster, Bazaar of the Bizarre, Class Acts, and comics, including The Order of the Stick.

We Thrive on Peril

I greatly enjoyed both the adventure and the background information for "The Coming Storm" in DUNGEON 136 (the rest of the magazine was great as well). Reading about the distant land of Mur got me thinking about the *World of GREYHAWK* outside of the Flanaess. I started searching my back issues of *DRAGON Annual* (good idea that annual, you should bring it back!).

I found the map in *DRAGON Annual* 1 way back from 1996—the rest of the continent of Oerik. Even though Mur is not listed, I can see where it fits: north of the former Baklunish Empire with Mur's mountains to the west and the Bay of Ghayar (unnamed on the map) to the east. Apparently, Hyberboria's real name is Telchuria.

I had written a letter to DRAGON a couple of years ago suggesting the idea of building a world in the pages of DRAGON. A kingdom here, a city there, some new monsters, etc. Perhaps Oerth could be that world (my idea was trumped by the coming of EBERRON back then). I would love to see the world of Oerth receive more treatment in both DRAGON and DUNGEON, perhaps starting with an updated map.

Bringing back the Flanaess would be fraught with peril because much that might be considered sacred canon could get trampled in the process. But western Oerik? I haven't seen anything beyond that one map that has been created for western Oerik until "The Coming Storm" was printed. I would love to see more, and would enjoy it even more if DRAGON and DUNGEON adopted that portion of Oerth as its own.

Charlie Dunwoody
Kentwood, MI

The idea of building an entirely new campaign setting over the course of several issues is a good one. In a way, we've sort of been doing that in DUNGEON all along; if you pay close attention, you'll notice things that were mentioned in one adventure becoming fairly important in other adventures down the road. As for expanding the boundaries of the known map of Oerth... stay tuned! The third installment of Savage Tide takes us nearly 1,500 miles south into all manner of unknown peril, and expands the map quite a bit in the process!

Eb-er-RON! (In Color)

Thank you, DUNGEON, for defending Prison Mail in issue #134. If people would just read this section, they would understand its importance, if only for telling us what is and is not in the works for future issues.

I have another reason for writing as well: you published four-part poster maps for Faerûn and GREYHAWK in previous magazines. Are there plans for EBERRON's very own four-part map? I just received DUNGEON #113 through back-order, and was very disappointed when I saw that there were no towns or cities shown on the map. I labeled it myself, but it's just not the same as when you awesome artists hook the maps up.

Michael Ray
Unadilla, GA

Despite the fact that we sometimes have to mine letters from our messageboards, there's no chance of Prison Mail going away. DUNGEON is, after all, a magazine, and having a letters section in a magazine is a long, proud tradition that a few years of internet message boards can't squash. Long live the letters section!

As for doing a four-part map of EBERRON—we currently have no plans along these lines, although we've talked at times about doing it. Currently, the best map of EBERRON that's out there can be found bundled with the EBERRON DM's Screen.

Hit Die Shortage

I received my copy of DUNGEON #136 and finally got to read it on my day off for Memorial Day. After reading "The Coming Storm," I decided to adapt the kamadan to my own campaign world of the Dying Sun, a Frostfell game.

Long story short, I couldn't get the numbers to work out. The kamadan's base attack bonus is one higher than it should be, the AC is one better, and it has more skill points than it should. I just can't get the number to fit. Has anyone else noticed this?

Bobby Nichols
Via Messageboard

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Every once in a while, an unfortunate error creeps into the magazine. Usually, these errors creep into the stat blocks, because, as we've discovered here at Paizo: Stat Blocks are HARD!

Fortunately, the error in the kamadan stat block is relatively minor. The kamadan actually has 8 Hit Dice, not 7 as the stat block indicated. The rest of the stats for the monster are all golden, since it was built as an 8 Hit Die monster in the first place.

Slow Down, Turbo!

I saw something similar mentioned in another thread, and thought I might make a good thread unto itself. A dilemma I and others have noticed is that it is hard to create a 1st to epic level campaign that does not involve saving the world, defeating a demon prince, or similar such mega plot. These are fun, but can become repetitive. This of course would be easily solved with shorter Adventure Paths, 1st to 10th level perhaps, although I remain a huge fan of the longer campaigns—some of my favorite games were those that lasted for years. So, what I propose, and submit for consideration, is the concept of a slower-paced 10-level campaign. The basic rewards would be reduced enough that each level of advancement would require two or three levels to attain.

I imagine campaigns executed in this manner to be similar to novels that I enjoy reading. Take Robert Jordan's novels for example. Many books have gone by and the character development pacing is such that just now they are beginning to reach the higher levels.

With a campaign that takes just as long but ends with the characters being only 10th or 11th level, a whole slew of possible plots are opened up for us. The local evil baron or shady organization can be as much a threat to the party as Kyuss or Adimarchus were to the higher-level groups. Find the secret recipe to cure the plague that threatens to kill everyone in their home town. Maybe an entire campaign takes place in a town where the town itself might not face the risk of being destroyed, but the souls of its citizens are in peril.

Tambryn
Via Messageboard

The 12-part Adventure Path is the most popular thing that DUNGEON has ever done, so I doubt you'll see us turning away from this formula anytime soon. That said, I agree that there's certainly an attraction to presenting shorter Adventure Paths. We'd be able to do more, for one thing, and we'd be able to tackle a wider range of plots. We've got another 3-part campaign arc scheduled for later in the year, so that might scratch some of the itch for shorter plotlines.

That said, Savage Tide has a much more leisurely pace than did Shackled City or Age of Worms. You can expect at least a year to pass in-game as your players go from the relatively safe streets of Sasserine to the deadliest layers of the Abyss.

Gamer Gift Packages

I would like to take a moment to say "Bravo Zulu" for a great magazine. You've got a talented team that turns out a brilliant magazine on a monthly basis. That's something to be proud of.

However, you're also a thoughtful team who has recently taken steps that go far beyond what your industry demands of you. I am, of course, referring to the "gamer gift packages" you sent to all us on the Gulf Coast who suffered a fairly chaotic fall last year. Sure, the country mobilized to help all of us who were displaced and rebuilding our lives in new places. But who expected a small team such as yourselves to chip in... and to do so long after the storms had faded from most peoples' minds? I know I certainly didn't. But you did. I can't even fathom how much time, effort, and work must have gone into organizing such an effort, but you did it. And in doing this, you reminded countless of us out here what it means to be a hero!

Well done, ladies and gentlemen, well done...

Jason Sonia
Houston, Texas

Thanks for the kind words, Jason! It's hard to imagine the true scope of what struck the Gulf Coast last year, even with the news footage and reports. Anything we can do to help our readers recover is time and resources well spent. And I'd like to take this chance to thank everyone outside of the editorial and art staff here at Paizo; they're the ones who organized the gift packages and got them out to where they needed to go, and if anyone deserves this praise, it's them!

A Look Under the Hood

I just recently got back into D&D after an absence of about 12 years, and given the advance in technology in those years (and the excellent layout of DUNGEON magazine—keep up the good work! The magazine is orders of magnitude better than when I was a teenager... not that it wasn't excellent then!), I assume that you have software that you use in designing adventures (for maps, stats, and overall layout). Can you fill us mere mortals in on what it may be? I'm a systems administrator/programmer by trade, so I don't mind using complex tools or doing some of my own programming, as long as whatever the tools are offer me an effective way to manage the design and layout of my own adventures.

Derek R.
Via Email

First of all, welcome back to the game, Derek!

We use a variety of programs to set up an issue of DUNGEON. The editorial team uses Microsoft Word to edit and develop adventures, during which we make heavy use of styles to indicate to the art team what sections of an adventure are sidebars, headers, stat blocks, and the like. For stat blocks themselves, we generally build them by hand, either in Word or with the good-old pencil and paper method. For some complex steps, such as skill points for multiclass NPCs or monsters with class levels, we use Microsoft Excel (we also use Excel when designing new monsters, using a handy spreadsheet that Wizards of the Coast's R&D department came up with).

All of the art and maps you see in DUNGEON are produced out of house by freelancers, who use a wide range of programs or do their work by hand. I know that Adobe Photoshop's a popular tool among many of our artists and cartographers, but it's not the only tool they use.

The art team uses InDesign to actually lay out the magazine. Sean, Sarah, and Drew use strange and eerie powers that I do not quite comprehend to transform the bland Word documents we create into the awesome-looking words you're reading right now. I'm not sure how they do it, but they do it every month. If they've got some secret tools they're using, they're certainly not telling me! —James Jacobs

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Give your players a good look at the last thing some of their characters will ever see—the Gargantuan Black Dragon.
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SIEGE OF THE SPIDER EATERS

BY TIM AND EILEEN CONNORS,
BY CYRIL VAN DER HAEGEN,
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI,
ANY SETTING, LOW-LEVEL (1ST–5TH), RURAL & DUNGEON CRAWL,

"The town of Haven-Fara bears two secrets. That it exists is one of them."

When the backwater town of Haven-Fara wakens under a thick blanket of webs to find half its populace missing, it's up to the PCs to descend into a silk-chambered nest of the arachnid abductors. In a vertical maze of web-lined tunnels, they discover a dying queen, a legendary treasure, and a secret that could change Haven-Fara forever.

This DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure is designed for four 1st-level PCs.

Adventure Background

Three hundred years ago, fate dealt legendary pirate Captain Grist Haven a cruel blow. While he was prowling exotic shipping lanes and filling the *Good Fortune*'s holds with ill-gotten gains, enormous spiders invaded his perfect hideaway and took his underground treasure bunker for their nest. Despite repeated attempts, Haven was never able to defeat the creatures, and spent the rest of his days in a nearby camp, coveting what he'd already stolen. When he died, his consorts and servants became the unlikely progenitors of the small, unknown pirate town of Haven-Fara.

Just a few years after Captain Haven died, as his slaves and servants began pirating again, a colony of araneas moved into the nearby bunker. One young aranea became infatuated with the human treasures he found there, and his passion ultimately led him to Haven-Fara, where for many years he successfully earned a living as a trafficker of stolen goods. Frequent trips to fence wares gave him time to return to the nest and dazzle other young araneas with seductive tales of the human world, and the nearly seamless integration of their species into Haven-Fara began.

Now, centuries later, araneas comprise 40% of the adult population of Haven-Fara. Since it is impossible to differentiate araneas from humans without powerful magic, no one suspects they are anything more than the humans they appear to be. Most spend their whole lives in the human settlement; others frequent the nest periodically by accepting duties that explain their absences.

Present day Haven-Fara is home to retired pirate Captain Arden "Cap" Galen, a notorious figure long obsessed with reclaiming Haven's legendary treasure for himself. Unsuccessful with direct assaults on the spider nest, Galen's sunken hopes

were recently buoyed when he discovered a map depicting a secret entrance to the bunker. With this new knowledge, he launched a final surprise raid and, to ensure absolute success, chose spider eaters as his champions. Surreptitiously trained and delivered, the enormous hornet-like creatures followed Galen to a secret entrance to the bunker and disappeared inside. Galen's plan was elegant—after the spider eaters killed the surprised spiders and implanted their eggs into paralyzed arachnid bodies, he would waltz into the unprotected treasure rooms and complete his victory with the prearranged sale of the valuable spider eater eggs.

Alas, Galen's plan didn't work out quite as he had hoped. The monstrous spiders that survived the spider eater attack escaped and proceeded with malicious intent toward the unsuspecting town of Haven-Fara. By morning, the entire town was cocooned in thick webbing and crawling with bristly black spiders the size of dogs. Moreover, nearly half the populace was missing—unbeknownst to Galen, disguised araneas within the town had answered their bunker-dwelling kin's cries for help, only to be overwhelmed by the spider eaters. The remaining residents called upon the town council to act. Senior member Cap Galen took charge and ordered everyone locked in their homes for their own safety—at which point he sent his obedient thugs to quietly and systematically loot the homes of the missing townsfolk.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs arrive at the cocooned, spider-infested town. To Galen's dismay, the council enlists the PCs' aid in rescuing the townsfolk they believe have been abducted by spiders. The PCs trek through Husk Forest and into the mouth of the treasure-bunker-turned-spiders'-nest.

Within, the PCs find dead araneas in both spider and human form, as well as dead spider eaters. They battle the surviving spider eaters and decide the fate of the paralyzed aranea queen, whose body is cruelly distended by implanted spider eater eggs. Deeper in the nest, an aranea woman named Arianne protects a group of frightened villagers. The PCs come to realize that the missing townsfolk and the gray spiders are one and the same, and Arianne entreats the PCs to escort the survivors to councilman Westin Mimetae, Galen's political enemy and the only aranea left in Haven-Fara.

The PCs escape through a sealed-off section of the bunker complex where the ancient pirate treasure awaits. They return to Haven-Fara only to be ambushed by a group of Galen's thugs eager to protect their master's secrets and recover the treasure. The PCs must break Westin out of prison, bring Galen to justice, and destroy the last spider eater. Ultimately, it's up to them to decide the fate of Haven-Fara, human and aranea alike.

Adventure Hooks

Since Haven-Fara does not appear on any maps, PCs shipwrecked or journeying through the wilderness might become lost and stumble upon it by accident. A merchant in the midst of a trade dispute may hear about the mysterious pirate town from an old mariner and send the PCs to meet with the brigands, hoping to contract a series of raids on the competition. A scholar researching the life of Captain Haven might recruit the PCs to locate what he believes to be the ruins of Haven's settlement, never considering that the pirate's retainers may still exist. Whatever the story, PCs should arrive at the edge of Haven-Fara alone.

Chapter One: Haven-Fara

Haven-Fara lies in a large clearing far from civilization, a mile from a secluded ocean shoreline. To the northwest, shifting shoals and poor anchorage keep explorers and rumor chasers at bay, and a discreet rise in the land hides the small town's wooden buildings from view. Cradling Haven-Fara to the southeast is the expansive and forbidding Husk Forest, wherein lies Captain Haven's legendary treasure bunker. Romantic bardic tales have popularized Captain Haven, his ship, and his treasure, but only its closemouthed residents know of the existence and location of Haven-Fara.

The town itself is a ramshackle place, evolved more than planned by the pirates and smugglers that now call it home. Families and shipmates live tightly together in the town's few densely situated buildings. Its single-story thatched roof homes are constructed from the wood of derelict ships. The *Good Fortune* pub, constructed from Captain Haven's beached and buttressed vessel of the same name, is prominently located in the center of town.

Haven-Fara (thorp): Conventional; AL N; Population: 61; 40 gp limit; Assets: 120 gp; Isolated (human 60%, aranea 40%).

Authority Figures: **Captain Arden "Cap" Galen**, dominant council member, owner of the *Good Fortune* pub (male human fighter 2/rogue 2); **Westin Mimetae**, council member, leader of Haven-Fara aranea, owner/operator of the Black Fly pub (male aranea).

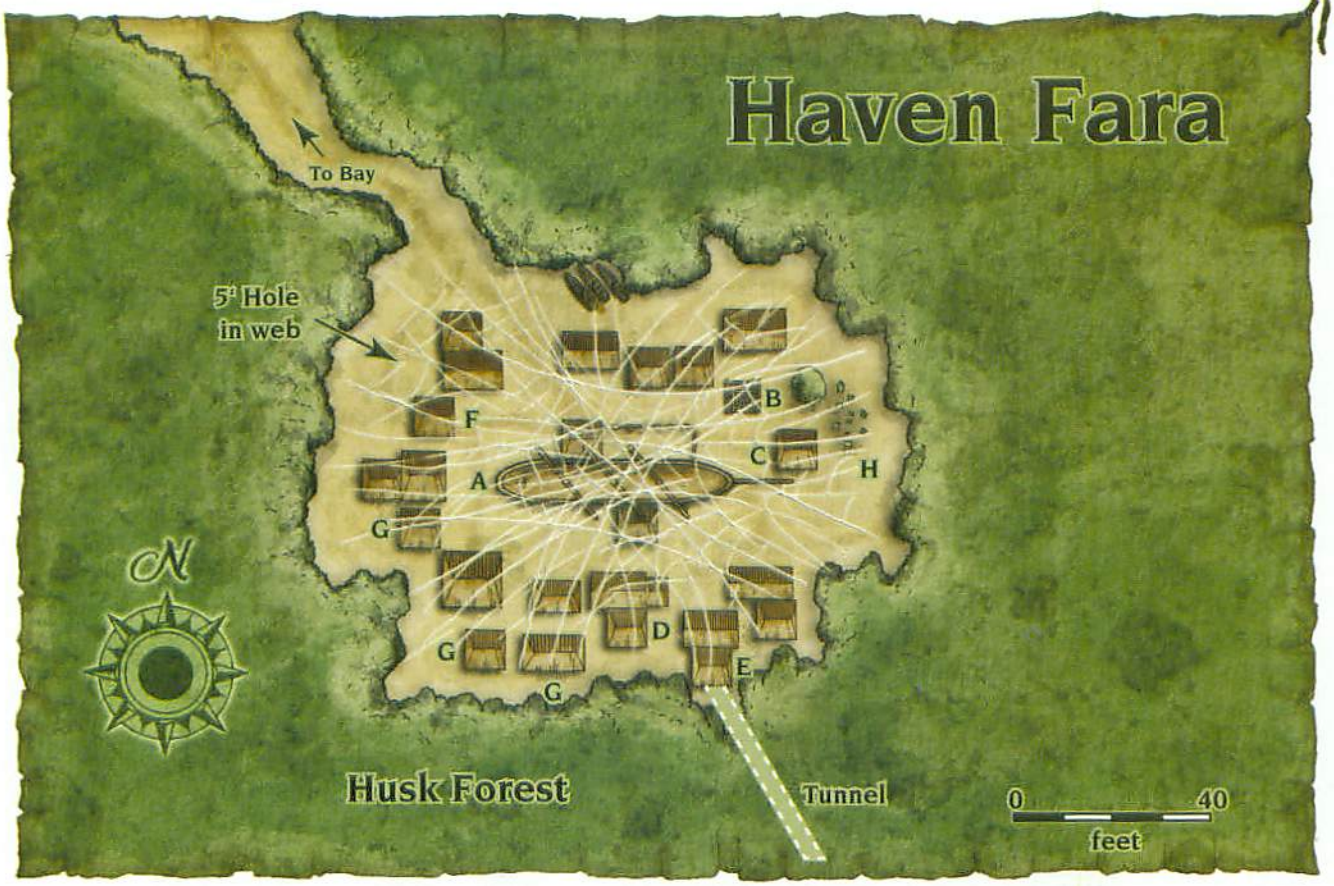
Important Characters: **Harc Longarm** and **Seth "Keel" Friston**, council members (male human fighter 2).

Notes: Of the twenty-four araneas that lived in Haven-Fara, only Westin Mimetae remains. Twenty are dead or dying in the spider nest. The other three left months ago on a pirating venture with fifteen Haven-Fara humans. This leaves only twenty-two adult humans and one adult aranea in town when the PCs arrive.

Arrival (EL 2)

Travel by sea is the easiest means of reaching the remote community of Haven-Fara. Shipboard PCs must either swim or row a skiff ashore, as only an expert navigator can sail a seagoing vessel into or out of the bay north of town, and even then only at high tide. A rotting dock and a rough footpath are the only signs of habitation, with the town proper located one mile south and inland. If PCs reach the town via overland travel, they run into this trail near the beach.

The PCs arrive on the day following the spider attack on Haven-Fara. Before they reach the town, the PCs are met by Jess Furrier, an upstanding, trustworthy lad of seventeen who is returning to Haven-Fara from a fruitless hunting expedition. Jess is extremely suspicious of all strangers, and leads them to Haven-Fara to be dealt with by the



council. As soon as the PCs are in sight of the settlement, read or paraphrase the following:

A small, ramshackle town of thatched-roof buildings sits in a large clearing, completely covered by a thick web blanket. As if dropped from the sky, the giant web drapes over a tall, trident-shaped structure in the town's center, then out and over the town's perimeter buildings before stretching taut to the ground.

Numerous black spiders the size of dogs crawl upon the web's surface. Most townsfolk are locked in their homes, per Captain Galen's orders, but children can be heard crying. As the monstrous spiders crawl on the web sheet, their exaggerated shadows are cast down upon the townscape below.

Jess stops in his tracks when he sees the webs and, with an expression of horror, mutters a quick prayer. He then begins scouting the perimeter of the town, looking for a way in, and quickly finds the five-foot-wide hole the Machy boys cut in the web sheet behind their house (area **F**). Once inside, Jess heads straight for the home of his beloved Patience (area **C**). The webs covering the town have dried out and lost their stickiness, and as such are unable to entangle PCs. (For more information on dealing with webs, see the *Monster Manual*, page 289.)

If the PCs try to set fire to the webs, Jess interrupts and points out that his home (and the rest of the town) is extremely flammable. If lit anyway, the webs burn away at a rate of one 5-foot section per round, collapsing onto Haven-Fara's thatched roofs and setting every structure except the *Good Fortune* and the jail (area **B**) alight. Thick black smoke scares the spiders into Husk Forest, but also forces residents outside. When the fire is extinguished, the spiders return, crawl up and into roofless homes, and attack anyone exposed.

Web Sheet (5-foot section): hp 6; DR 5/slashing; Escape Artist DC 12; Break DC 16.

Creatures: Twenty black-brown spiders crawl upon the upper reaches of the web sheet. Their bristly legs are three feet long, their many eyes are black and vacant, and their thick, tarantula-like bodies are covered in a dense, coarse hair. They fight among themselves most of the time. Four converge upon any interloper disturbing the web, which includes entering through the Machy Boys' hole, and any ranged attack against a spider not involved in combat causes it and a companion to engage the aggressor. An attacking spider is initially 20 to 50 (1d4+1 × 10) feet distant.

Jess Furrier **CR 1**

Male human ranger 1
NG Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +6
Languages Common

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12
hp 9 (1 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft.
Melee short sword +2 (1d6+1/19–20)
Ranged shortbow +3 (1d6/×3)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2
Atk Options Point Blank Shot, favored enemy +2 (vermin)
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of delay poison*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 10
Feats Point Blank Shot, Self-Sufficient, Track
Skills Climb +5, Heal +4, Knowledge (nature) +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +6, Survival +8, Swim +5
Possessions combat gear, leather armor, short sword, shortbow, quiver of 20 arrows, belt pouch containing 14 gp

Small Monstrous Spider (5 groups of 4): hp 4; *Monster Manual* 288.

A. The *Good Fortune*

In the center of town is a grounded ship. Its three masts, complete with crow's nest, prop up the web like poles in a gossamer circus tent. Permanent additions have been built out from the hull, but it is unmistakably a beached vessel—forecastle, rails, and all. A richly carved and gold-leafed sign reads "The *Good Fortune*."

This is Captain Haven's original vessel, propped upright by heavy timbers and well preserved with oils. A carved wooden entryway has been added where the hull is breached on one side. A 10-foot-square outbuilding sits against the opposite side, and a newly constructed fenced yard is situated against this building and the ship. Neighing hungrily in the small space are the seven horses that Galen purchased for convenient incubation and transport of stolen spider eater eggs. Their mangy appearance and nearly empty water trough bespeak their neglect.

Within, the ship's hull has been turned into a pub, gutted and floored to accommodate long tables and stools. Wood stoves sit at either end, and dozens of mugs dangle from hooks along the rafters.

A DC 15 Spot check notices a tarantula in a terrarium that Galen keeps on display behind the bar, as well as an iron key (to the jail—area **B**) that Galen dropped inside.

Behind the bar is a staircase to Galen's quarters. Inside, well-marked maps decorate the mahogany cabin walls. A large desk, a wide hammock, and two large trunks dominate the room. Among the clothes and bundles of missives in the trunks, a DC 15 Search check reveals a letter addressed to Arden Galen. It is dated three months ago, is illegibly signed, and confirms a commitment to purchase spider eater eggs at 2,000 gp each.

Creatures: Cap Galen stands behind the bar. He has a commanding presence and is locally renown for his strength of conviction and forceful leadership. The most prominent and influential of the town's leaders, Galen is charismatic enough to disguise the fact that he never lets the town's interests interfere with his own.

Also present are two old men: councilmen Harc Longarm and Seth "Keel" Friston. Longtime friends and shipmates, these retired pirates are now in their seventies. A mess of misshapen tattoos stains Harc's wrinkly frame, and a burn on his cheek replaces the tattoo that once identified him as a slave. Keel is differently marked—as a lad, his face and body were severely scarred from keelhauling, a disciplinary action in which he was stripped, thrown overboard, and drawn under the heavily barnacled hull on a tight rope.

Galen's growing agitation weakens his feigned concern over the missing townsfolk. Harc and Keel argue that a party should be assembled to rescue the missing folk from the spiders' nest while the spiders are here. Galen is adamantly against such a mission, dismissing the missing as already dead. In truth, he worries that a rescue team may find and take Haven's treasure for themselves.

The men demand that the PCs explain how and why they came to Haven-Fara. All are suspicious of the PCs' coincidental arrival, and since no one knows about Galen's spider eater gambit, the old men suspect that the PCs may have something to do with the spider attack. If the PCs express a desire to help the town, Harc and Keel feign friendliness, recognizing the PCs as an expendable resource. All three men make it clear that any other business dealings should be left until after the rescue mission is complete.

Once feigning friendliness, Harc and Keel open up to Gather Information checks. Any adult in town can relate DC 0 information, and no check is necessary to reveal any fact as the result of a direct PC question.

If the PCs agree to seek the missing townfolk, the old men mark the locations of Haven-Fara and the spiders' nest on a map of Husk Forest. Once the PCs leave for the spiders' nest and the other council members have gone about their business, Galen commands three of his thugs (Mik, Fynn, and Etan) to wait just outside the settlement and ambush the party upon their return, stealing any loot and killing any rescued citizens so as to leave no witnesses.

Captain Arden "Cap" Galen **CR 4**
Male human rogue 2/fighter 2
CN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Common
AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Dodge
hp 24 (4 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0; evasion
Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *longsword* +7 (1d8+3/19–20)
Ranged light crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5
Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (3), *potion of aid*
Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15
SQ trapfinding

Gather Information check results

Result	Information
DC 0	At least twenty people disappeared the night the town was webbed. The Machy brothers reported human and spider tracks just outside the web, substantiating the belief that the spiders took the missing townsfolk into Husk Forest, probably to Haven's bunker.
DC 10	Councilman Westin Mimetae was jailed by Galen for looting.
DC 14	Entire families are either untouched or totally missing.

Feats Blind-Fight, Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Appraise +3, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +8, Decipher Script +2, Disguise +4, Gather Information +6, Intimidate +9, Listen +3, Profession (sailor) +5, Search +3, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +3, Spot +3
Possessions combat gear, chain shirt, light darkwood shield, +1 *longsword*, light crossbow with 20 bolts, belt pouch with 18 pp and 20 gp

GALEN'S THUGS (MIK GODKIN, ETAN FLINT, FYNN BLAKCORT, DRAKE AND TARN MACHY) **CR 1**
Male human rogue 1
N Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Common

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Dodge
hp 7 (1 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

Spd 30 ft.
Melee dagger +2 (1d4+2/19–20)
Ranged light crossbow +2 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +2
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ trapfinding
Feats Blind-Fight
Skills Bluff +3, Hide +6, Intimidate +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Open Locks +6, Profession (Sailor) +5, Search +4, Spot +5
Possessions leather armor, dagger, light crossbow with 10 bolts, belt pouch with 10 gp

B. The Town Jail

This small wooden outbuilding is made of rough planks and has no windows except for a barred opening set in the door.

This converted shed serves as the town's jail. The man currently held here is Westin Mimetae, the settlement's fourth councilman, leader of the Haven-Fara araneas, and long-time political enemy of Cap Galen. After the spiders attacked, Westin's opposition made it inconvenient for Galen to salvage his plot by robbing the townsfolk blind, so Galen locked Westin up on false charges of looting. Since Westin's only allies are the Haven-Fara araneas who left to defend the nest, no one questioned this injustice. Westin is now the only aranea left in Haven-Fara.

Westin becomes friendly toward the PCs once he is sure that they are not working for Galen. His position is tenuous—he does not wish to reveal the araneas' true nature, yet he needs a strong group to determine the fate of his brethren and rescue any survivors. He is aware that a party descending into the nest has a good chance of discovering the araneas' secret, but is convinced that the secret is worthless if there are no araneas left for it to protect. He petitions the PCs to rescue the missing townsfolk, but is careful to give them no reason to presume that the missing are anything more than unfortunate humans. He encourages the PCs to take whatever provisions they need from his home, the Black Fly pub (area **D**), and to purchase sunrods and other gear from the General Store (area **E**).

Westin informs the PCs that he is highly suspicious of Galen's involvement in the attack. He tells them of Galen's life-long obsession with claiming Captain Haven's famous treasure, and that someone saw Galen in Husk Forest the night before the attack. He does not tell them that this person was an aranea who sent him a *whispering wind* message.

If freed, Westin refuses to go to the nest. Instead, he optimistically prepares the Black Fly pub to receive any araneas returning with injuries. Galen, for his part, loudly protests the PCs' meddling in "local judicial matters," but waits for the party to leave before having his thugs beat Westin into submission and imprison him in an empty sugar barrel.

Simple Wooden Door: 1 inch thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 15; Open Locks DC 20.

Westin Mimetae, male aranea: hp 22; *Monster Manual* 15.

C. The Crazed Scholar (EL 2)

The door to this small thatched hut is wide open. An old man with a salt-white beard periodically dashes out, peers up through a spyglass at the spiders crawling on the town's cocoon, then dashes back in to scribble on a piece of parchment. A hand-sized dead spider painted with red and white stripes is

nailed to the outside of the door. In addition to books about spiders, the hut is filled with an alarming collection of spider paraphernalia: an eight-foot-long spider leg hangs on the wall, well-catalogued glass jars of spider fangs, eyes, and hair rest on wooden shelves, and five terrariums contain brightly colored live specimens.

This is the home of Dr. Gryll, Galen's old ship's surgeon. Gryll is genuinely interested in the welfare of others, but most find his obsession with spiders repulsive. He feels irrationally protected by his understanding of the creatures, and excitedly points out to the PCs which spiders are web-spinners and which are hunters. He offers to accompany them to the spider nest—if the PCs decline, he gives them his potions only if they promise to return with body parts of each species of vermin they encounter.

Gryll's fifteen-year-old daughter Patience lives with him. Her father, convinced of the therapeutic properties of spiders, used to dump whole bags of them on her whenever she had a fever, and her skin bears several scars from scratching at the itchy bites. Though she's grown used to the numerous specimens in their home, she does not share her father's blind trust of arachnids. She'd like nothing better than to leave Haven-Fara with Jess, her beloved, and never look back. Though Jess' first instinct is to stay here and protect Patience until the monstrous spiders are gone, he can be convinced to join a rescue attempt in exchange for passage out of Haven-Fara for him and Patience once the adventure is complete.

Creatures: On one of Gryll's trips outside, two Medium monstrous spiders attack Gryll and the PCs from above.

Medium Monstrous Spider (2): hp 11; *Monster Manual* 288.

Tactics: From the town's cocoon 25 feet above, each spider descends 10 feet on a web strand and attacks with a thrown web. If an entangled victim weighs 230 lbs or less, the spider is strong enough to hoist the unfortunate soul up the strand at its overloaded climb speed of 5 feet per round. Once it reaches the town's web cocoon, the spider kills its prey before dragging it around the cocoon in an effort to avoid sharing the morsel.

Dr. Gryll fights only if attacked, and even then refuses to deal lethal damage, yelling misguided advice like, "They're just scared—rub their thoraxes and they'll calm down!" or "Lie on your back and play dead!"

Dr. Jakob Gryll **CR 1**
Male human expert 2
CG Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot +4
Languages Common, Sylvan
AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10
hp 7 (2 HD)
Fort +0, **Ref** +0, **Will** +2
Spd 30 ft.
Melee dagger +0 (1d4–1/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +0
Abilities Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12
Feats Skill Focus (Knowledge [nature]), Animal Affinity
Skills Climb +4, Concentration +6, Decipher Script +5, Diplomacy +6, Handle Animal +8, Heal +4, Knowledge (nature) +9, Ride +4, Spot +4
Possessions dagger, healer's kit, spyglass

Treasure: A lower cabinet on the west wall contains four labeled glass bottles: an *unguent of timelessness*, a *potion of cure light wounds*, a *potion of remove paralysis*, and a *potion of delay poison*. Gryll's spyglass is cracked, old, and practically worthless.

D. The Black Fly Pub (EL 2)

The shape of a house fly is burnt into a wooden sign hung over the door of this building.

Two concentric rings of tall tables are arranged around a central island bar. There are no chairs, suspiciously few candles, and the small corner fireplace appears inadequate for cooking or heating. A hammock hangs in a small back room.

The Black Fly pub is owned and operated by councilman Westin Mimetae. A successful DC 15 Spot check reveals that the throw rug under the hammock has a small rectangular shape crushed into its piling. The lockbox that sat here was recently stolen by the Machy brothers and brought to their house (area **F**).

Under the same rug is the trapdoor to the root cellar. Within the root cellar is a secret door to a tunnel leading out of town. After 50 feet, the tunnel emerges behind a dense stand of trees in Husk Forest in the direction of the spiders' nest. The araneas use this route as a secret means of entering and exiting town. Westin disavows all knowledge of the tunnel's existence.

Creatures: Two Medium monstrous spiders discovered the Husk Forest end of the tunnel, which was carelessly concealed by araneas exiting town in haste. The spiders spring out of the root cellar and attack when the rug is moved or a PC exits the room.

Medium Monstrous Spider (2): hp 11; *Monster Manual* 288.

Treasure: Behind the bar are 20 gallons of ale, 3 loaves of day-old bread, and various other foodstuffs. In Westin's room, a backpack contains a leather-bound bottle of antitoxin, three belt pouches, two sacks, a smokestick, thieves' tools, and two waterskins.

E. The General Store

The town's general store is nothing more than an oversized home filled with sparsely stocked wooden shelves. Consumables like tomatoes, eggs, and bait sit next to tools, weapons, and ship's tackle.

Councilman Harc Longarm's middle-aged wife Sarka and seven-year-old boy Estil manage the daily operation of this store. All merchandise is priced normally. The actual items and number available are left to your discretion, but include no more than what's listed in the *Player's Handbook* and doesn't violate the community's 40 gp limit. If asked about Galen's activities, Harc knows only that he recently received a large shipment of unusual supplies, including several horses, from the last ship to venture into civilization.

F. The Machys

The smell of burning flesh issues from beyond the locked front door (DC 20

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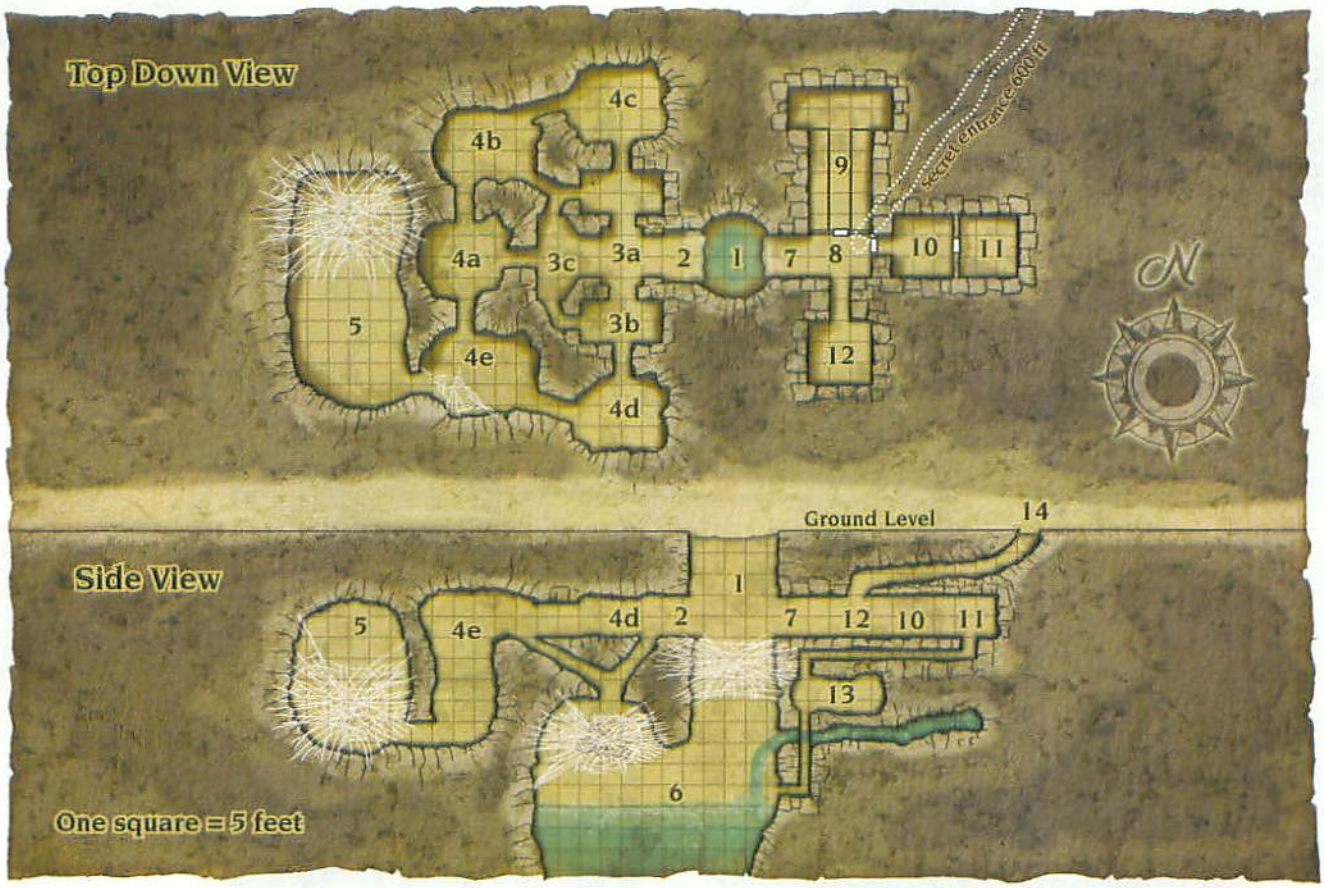

Open Lock check) to this building. Inside, a badly burned, middle-aged woman lies dead on the floor of this one-room residence. A small chest, blackened by fire, sits open in front of her, and a set of metal tools and picks are sprawled about the place. Several open sea chests contain ivory statuettes and a silver tea set, along with other small treasures.

Seventeen-year-old fraternal twins Drake and Tarn Machy have been looting the homes of the missing for Galen and bringing choice items back home to mother as well. Old Mrs. Machy was just killed by a *burning hands* trap protecting a lockbox that her sons stole from Westin Mimetae's pub (area **D**). Drake Machy arrives five minutes after the PCs enter the house—any PC that makes a successful DC 12 Listen check detects his approach one round before he enters to discover his mother's corpse. If the PCs confront Drake directly, he screams for them to get out of his house, then scoops up his mother and hurries to see Dr. Gryll (area **C**). Since the Machys are essentially stealing from Galen, they can complain to no one about the PCs taking any of the treasure here, nor do they reveal the cause of Mrs. Machy's death.

Simple wooden door: hp 10; Hardness 5; Break DC 15; Open Lock DC 20.

Treasure: Inside the lockbox are two *potions of remove paralysis* and a map of Husk Forest. Though badly burned, the map shows enough to lead the PCs to the secret entrance to Haven's bunker (area **14**). Westin discovered these while snooping in Galen's quarters—if confronted, Westin admits to the theft, while Galen claims he never saw any of it before. This room also contains a scattered set of masterwork thieves' tools (100 gp), five ivory statuettes (50 gp each), a large silver ewer (80 gp), a silver tea set (65 gp), and a small, finely woven silk rug (125 gp).

G. Empty Aranea Homes

Hammocks swing empty under a thatched roof, and numerous mundane personal items lie strewn about.

Each home has several hammocks. Personal items such as clothes, books, and kitchen utensils are strewn about, but though half-eaten meals suggest that the inhabitants left in a hurry, there is no evidence of a struggle or abduction. The aranea homes are indistinguishable from any of the human homes in Haven-Fara.

Creature: There is a 25% chance that the PCs walk in on one of Galen's thugs looting the place. He claims to be searching for clues to the missing townsfolks' disappearance (Bluff check).

H. Graveyard

In a patch of ground between the town and the tree line, crudely chiseled flat stones stand at odd angles around an oversized tombstone.

This sizeable graveyard is a testament to the frequency of death in such remote communities. The large center stone reads: "Captain Grist Haven—Once feared, always loved."

Chapter Two: The Spiders' Nest

Deep in Husk Forest, under the trees' dark canopy, a web-lined funnel leads into a

gaping mouth in the earth. Once, this hole was a narrow, man-made entrance leading thirty feet below the forest floor to a room joining the two halves of Captain Haven's treasure bunker. Now, due to erosion from a subterranean stream, it is a wide shaft cutting through the first rooms of either half before plunging into a lake sixty feet further down.

A large colony of araneas resides in the western half of Haven's bunker. Their cylindrical web tunnels connect the bunker chambers with numerous nearby caverns. Created and supported by massive tree roots, these cavernous pockets provide both private and communal areas for the growing nest. Strategically placed fire beetle glands provide a soft red glow throughout.

Over the last three hundred years, the araneas have depleted much of the treasure stored in the western half of the bunker. The eastern half's treasures remain—ever since an aranea queen lost a curious child to one of Haven's booby traps, the doors to the eastern half of the bunker have been kept locked.

Now those eastern doors lie open. When the spider eaters entered the bunker's secret entrance, they burst through from the doors' opposite side, laying waste to the surprised araneas in the nest. The defenders' *whispering wind* recall of Haven-Fara araneas served only to lead more of their brethren to the slaughter. Now, wounded spider eaters flap past dead and dying araneas, and the araneas' dangerous food supply is waking from a poison-induced sleep.

Dungeon Features: Unless otherwise noted, webs are not sticky and cannot entangle. Artificial rooms have masonry walls, flagstone floors, 10-foot ceilings, and rectangular stone doors capped with the Haven family crest. Red, glowing fire beetle glands provide shadowy illumination in the western half of the bunker (areas **2**, **3**, and **4**). All web tubes are unlit and can fit a creature of up to Large size.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28.

Getting to the Nest

Haven's treasure bunker is five miles southeast of Haven-Fara. Due to darkness and difficult terrain, it takes twelve hours to travel there by foot. Curls of bark drape between massive tree trunks in wide, web-filled arches. The ground is layer upon layer of sticky, decaying web and plant matter that releases detritus-covered boots with a kissing sound.

1. The Main Entrance (EL 1)

A gaping black hole at least thirty feet in diameter punctuates a clearing in the forest. Thickly intertwined webs form a continuous tube that twists and funnels into the depths. The cool air of places deep and dark breathes out. Glow bugs stuck in webs provide the only illumination, and the sound of rushing water drifts up from far below.

The wide cylindrical shaft plunges 90 feet into a 10-foot-deep subterranean lake that stretches westward into area **6**. Climbing down the web tube requires a DC 10 Climb check. Descending the walls themselves requires a series of DC 17 Climb checks. Thirty feet down, on the west and east sides of the shaft, the stone floor of areas **2** and **7** protrude 3 feet into the shaft. From 35 to 55 feet down, the araneas have slung sticky webs across the passage to catch prey lured over the edge above by the sound of running water below. A PC takes no damage from a fall into these webs, but becomes entangled. Vertical movement through this web is extremely difficult without burning the webs away. Below the webs, the shaft walls are bare until they reach the lake in area **6**.

2. Western Bunker Entrance

The eastern floor of this rectangular room ends in a jagged stone ledge with a tube of webbing extending from the ledge up to the surface. Beyond the ledge lies a wide, vertical shaft. On the west wall, an archway opens onto darkness and three pairs of glowing red points.

On the floor near the north wall is a multi-hinged, three-foot-wide wooden plank. Unfolded, the wooden plank is 30 feet long and spans the distance between this room and area **7**. Depend-

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ing on the PCs' vision and light source, they may be able to make out the shape of the chimera statue 30 feet distant in area **3a**. This conspicuously webless room is designed as a firebreak. Without it, a forest fire or even a torch falling into the shaft could ignite the whole place.

3. Haven's Western Bunker

These four rooms were once Haven's main trove. Over the last 300 years, the riches have been depleted by the araneas.

Six-foot-wide web tubes dug through earth and roots join these rooms and the nearby caverns together. Some of the tubes are blocked by thick web sheets.

Web Sheet: 18 in. thick; 6 ft. diameter; Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 20.

3a. Main Room

A large stone figure of a three-headed winged beast sits in the center of this web-covered twenty-foot-square room. The eyes of its goat, lion, and dragon heads glow red. There is an open doorway in the center of each wall, and pairs of mutilated human bodies lie in both the northern and southern doorways.

The statue is a real chimera, turned to stone long ago by a gorgon. Acquired by Haven in some distant land, the araneas originally kept it due to its sheer weight (5,000 lbs). Over time, they came to see symbolism in its triform being. The only fire beetle glands in this room are the ones placed on the chimera's eyes. A DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check reveals these wet glands for what they are.

The four dead bodies are those of araneas who attempted to escape in human form. They wear clothes typical of Haven-Fara, but only two faces are identifiable through all of the puncture and bite wounds. A Haven-Fara resident recognizes them as Kael and Lysia Tiller, two of Haven-Fara's missing citizens.

3b. South Room

A DC 12 Search check reveals a web tube on the south wall, hidden by the thick web sheet that lines the room.

3c. West Room

This 15-by-30-foot room is empty except for two dead araneas on the floor. A DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check confirms these dead bodies are not true spiders, while a DC 13 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the dead creatures as araneas.

3d. North Room

A DC 12 Search check reveals a web tube on the north wall, hidden by a thick web sheet created by defending araneas. A DC 10 Spot check is enough to notice two unmoving human forms (dead araneas) just inside the tube. The PCs can discern the glint of two daggers by the araneas' feet and the reduced thickness of the web where they began cutting it away on their side. A Haven-Fara resident recognizes these mutilated male bodies as those of Renner and Giron Tackleside, two of Haven-Fara's missing citizens.

4. Spider Caverns

These five cavernous pockets are each roughly 40 feet by 30 feet. Water flows over colored mineral veins shot along the earthen walls. Massive exposed tree roots support the 10- to 15-foot-high ceilings. Fire beetle glands spaced 10 feet apart glow red from rocky shelves on the walls. Scattered about the floor in each room are a few small jugs of water and ale, broken glass, miscellaneous books (some in Sylvan), and small boxes of spices and herbs. In addition to the web tubes that connect these rooms to each other and to area **3**, each room has a six-foot-wide web tube hole in the floor. These spoke down (Climb DC 0) into a hub 15 feet below the center of area **3a**, where they drop 10 feet vertically as a single tube (Climb DC 5) into area **6**.

4a. West Cavern

A thick web sheet cuts across the northwest corner of the room. A DC 10 Search check reveals numerous punctures in the sheet. Behind it are two dead araneas in spider form.

Treasure: A DC 15 Search check reveals a *potion of remove paralysis* webbed to the ceiling.

4b. Centipede Cavern (EL 1)

Three dead araneas in spider form lie in the southeast corner of this room. Against the wall behind them is an old wooden wardrobe containing neatly folded Haven-Fara clothing, three backpacks, five waterskins, three daggers, and a short sword.

Creatures: A monstrous centipede hides along the west wall of this cavern. Instead of being on the aranea menu, it was released from area **13** when the few araneas hiding there recognized that they could no longer poison into helplessness the large number of live creatures in food storage. If it notices any intruders, it attacks.

Large Monstrous Centipede: hp 13; *Monster Manual* 286.

Treasure: A side pocket of one of the backpacks contains a *potion of cure light wounds.*

4c. North Cavern

A single dead aranea lies near the web tube opening on the south wall.

4d. Wounded Spider Eater (EL 2)

An aranea lies on its back in the northeast corner of this cavern while a large hornet-like creature crouches in the opposite corner. Almost ten feet long, the creature raises itself awkwardly into the air on large bat wings. Its leathery wings are torn in numerous places, and rich red blood drips from a stump on the end of its abdomen.

Creatures: Though badly wounded and poisoned, the spider eater attacks the PCs on sight. A DC 15 Spot check notices the spider eater's severed stinger deeply implanted in the dead aranea's back.

Wounded Spider Eater: hp 42 (currently 20), see page 25, but without a sting attack.

4e. The Iron Curtain

Hundreds of web curtains hang one behind the other in this large cavern.

If the PCs enter from area **4a**, all passage and vision are blocked by the sheets that the araneas created to protect their queen. It takes 45 minutes to cut a three-foot-wide

path just five feet deep. If the PCs enter from **4d**, the sheets are ripped in such a way as to form a path leading to the southwest corner of the room.

A fifteen-foot-square section of floor in the southwest corner is actually a taut web sheet covering a forty-foot-long drop. Two dead araneas in spider form lay atop it. A six-foot-wide hole in this web floor opens into a web tube that descends in a counterclockwise spiral before continuing horizontally into area **5**.

5. Queen's Chamber (EL 4)

The spiraling web tube descends forty feet before entering the south end of a great cavernous chamber. Well-lit by sconces along the walls, the cavern is covered floor to ceiling in webs. The bodies of a dozen dead spiders litter the floor. At the far end of the cave, an enormous web is attached to the wall.

Creatures: The aranea queen lies slumped on the webs here. After being stung by multiple spider eaters, her legs came to a final, paralytic halt. She is now the host to four implanted spider eater eggs (DC 15 Knowledge [nature] or Heal check to notice). She remains paralyzed for the entire 45-day gestation period. During this time, the spider eaters act upon strong maternal instincts. Periodically regurgitating a watery slurry of nourishment into her mandibles, the spider eaters sustain the queen until their eggs hatch. If deprived of such care, the queen dies of dehydration in three days. Shortly after birth, the hungry spider eater hatchlings devour their host alive.

Tactics: The spider eater hovers protectively over the aranea queen for one round before attacking the PCs. Once battle is joined, it focuses its attacks on whoever damaged it last.

Treasure: A bejeweled dagger worth 80 gp hangs prominently on the eastern wall. Its serrated edge is curiously uneven, not unlike the notches of a key, and is used to open the secret door in area **8**—the aranea queen keeps it here to prevent curious children from opening up Haven's treasure vault and springing any further traps. If rescued from her current situation she offers it to the PCs in hopes that they will clear away any further impediments and open the western bunker up for aranea habitation.

Wounded Spider Eater CR 2

Large Magical Beast

Monster Manual 234

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +10, Spot +11

AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 13

hp 42 (currently 20, 4 HD)

Fort +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft (good)

Melee sting +4 (1d8+1 plus poison, Fort DC 17, 0/paralysis for 1d8+5 weeks) and bite –1 (1d8–2)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +9

Special Actions implant

Abilities Str 12, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

SQ freedom of movement

Feats Alertness, Dodge

Skills Listen +10, Spot +11

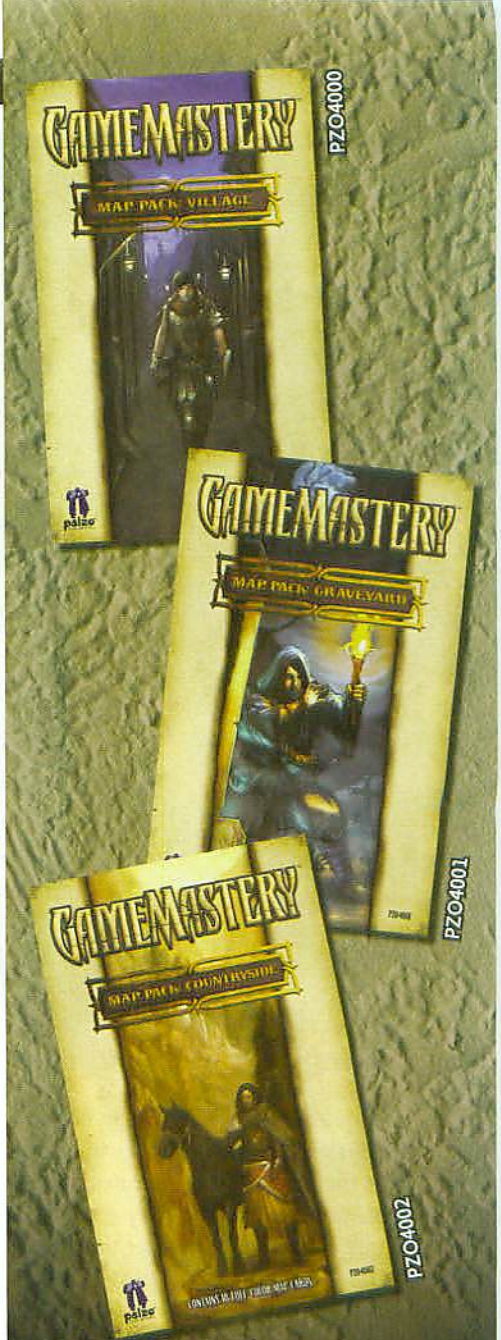
Aspinae, Aranea Queen: hp 10 of 22. *Monster Manual* 15.

Spider Eater Egg (12): 10 in. diameter globe; hp 8; Break DC 12.

Development: In the event that the PCs are accompanied by the aranea children from area **13**, the children change into spider form, flock to the queen's side, and attempt to keep their bodies between her and harm. If Gryll accompanies the PCs, he warns them that a spider eater's stinger can paralyze a man for two months.

The queen, though paralyzed, remains entirely aware. If her paralysis is cured, she becomes crazed while any eggs remain implanted. In a fruitless effort to remove and destroy them, she screams and pleads for help (in Common and Sylvan) while scraping and slamming her back on the floor and walls. She is horror-blind to the 1d4 points of damage she deals herself each round and ultimately falls unconscious and bleeds to death if unassisted.

Removing implanted spider eggs without killing the host is tricky business. There are four eggs in the aranea queen. A successful DC 15 Heal check is required to surgically remove an egg. Apply a +2 bonus if the host is paralyzed or unconscious during the procedure,



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and an additional +2 synergy bonus if the healer has at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (nature). Failure indicates no eggs were removed. Failure by 5 or more causes 1d4 points of damage to the host. Retries are allowed. Eggs die if outside a host for more than 72 hours.

If the PCs save her, the queen's reaction depends on whether the aranea children accompany the PCs. If they do, she thanks the PCs and hurriedly begs them to take the children to Haven-Fara. She candidly answers PC questions about araneas for five minutes before insisting the PCs leave.

If the aranea children do not accompany the PCs, the queen thanks the PCs and begs them to lead her children out of the nest from their hiding place behind the waterfall (area **13**). She gives the PCs no reason to believe that she is anything more than an intelligent spider requesting that the PCs save her spider babies. The queen gives the PCs her signet ring so the children will recognize the PCs as her emissaries. Her recent trauma and the slaughter of her kin leads to hastily answered PC questions and blinds her to the possible consequences of the PCs discovering the children in human form. She claims no knowledge of the spider attack on the town, and explains that those spiders are of an unintelligent species, scared into flight by the spider eater invasion.

Ad Hoc Experience Awards: If the PCs successfully rescue the aranea queen by removing all the implanted eggs, give them a CR 3 experience award.

6. Hydra Cocoon (EL 2)

A subterranean stream cascades through the eastern side of this large cavern to fall twenty-five feet into the lake below. Suspended near the western ceiling is a giant web supporting a thirty-foot-long cocoon and a woven tube leading up into the darkness.

This room provides the araneas with a source of fresh water and a facility for discarding degradable refuse. The partially eaten dead bodies of twenty fire beetles create a red scintillating effect as they churn in the lake below the waterfall. They were discarded from area **13** along with the lifeless bodies of the other giant vermin that now lie on the lake bottom. Behind the waterfall is a muddy web tube just big enough for a Medium creature to crawl through. It leads 10 feet horizontally before turning upward (Climb DC 0) toward area **13**.

On the western end, just above the lake's surface, braided web strands help anchor the cocoon in place. A successful DC 5 Climb check is required to traverse these 15-foot-long web strands and climb the further 20 feet over the cocoon to the web tube atop it. Failure indicates a fall into the 10-foot-deep lake below. Falling PCs take 1d3 nonlethal damage for each 10 feet over the initial 20 feet fallen.

If PCs examine the cocoon, read or paraphrase the following:

The thirty-foot-long cocoon in the center of the web is not quite large enough to

contain its victim. Within is a reddish-brown reptilian creature. While most of its body is wrapped in thick silken strands and held fast, its long, multi-tipped tail and five triangular heads writhe and twitch out over the water. Long tongues hang out past sharp yellow teeth.

Two rounds after any PC begins climbing around on its cocoon, the hydra's eyes snap open and it attacks.

Creature: Several years ago, the araneas subdued a hydra that rampaged through Husk Forest. They dragged the creature into their nest and have been feeding on it ever since. Its ability to fast heal, coupled with a *ring of sustenance*, make it the perfect never-ending food source. Systematic poisoning left the hydra at a constant Strength score of 0, alive but unable to move. Since the attack on their nest, the araneas have been remiss in this duty, and the hydra is slowly recovering. The stats below incorporate its poisoned and entangled condition.

Poisoned and Entangled Hydra CR 5
N Huge magical beast
Monster Manual 156
Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low light vision, scent; Listen +6, Spot +6
AC 13, touch 7, flat-footed 13
hp 55 (5 HD); fast healing 15
Fort +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3
Spd 20 ft., swim 20 ft. (currently immobile)
Melee 5 bites –3 (1d10–4)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +9
Abilities Str 17 (currently 2), Dex 12 (currently 8), Con 20, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 9
Feats Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Toughness
Skills Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +4

Tactics: The hydra's body is fixed in place. Its heads can attack anyone climbing on the western hemisphere of the cocoon. Climbing targets lose their dexterity bonus to AC, cannot employ a shield, and if damaged must make a DC 5 Climb check to avoid falling. If damaged by a PC climbing on the eastern hemisphere of the cocoon, the hydra thrashes wildly (a full round action), forcing the PC to make a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid falling into the lake.

Web Cocoon: 20 in. thick; 30 ft. diameter; hp 25; Hardness 5; Break DC 19.

Treasure: The araneas have placed a *ring of sustenance* on one of the hydra's large claws.

***Ad Hoc* Experience Award:** Due to the hydra's poisoned and entangled state, PCs who kill it receive a CR 2 experience award.

7. Eastern Bunker Entrance

The western floor of this rectangular room ends in a stone ledge where it has been cut short by a wide vertical shaft. On the eastern wall, a pair of wide stone doors hangs awkwardly open on broken hinges. The room beyond the eastern doors is dark.

8. Haven's Suite Entrance (EL 2)

Broken double doors on the west wall and a large hole in the ceiling provide entry to this room. On the north and east walls are closed stone doors. Two stone statues of angelic figures kneel facing the south wall.

There is a secret door (DC 20 Search check to detect) on the south wall. Because the stone doors on the north and east walls are locked by hidden mechanisms built into the doors themselves, the locks can neither be picked nor attacked. The locking mechanism on the south wall can be opened with a DC 30 Open Lock check.

Stone door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28.

The North Door (EL 2)

Three small levers are set in short vertical slots on the north stone door. The left and center levers are in the raised position. The right lever is lowered.

Imagining that he might one day be forced to open this door under duress, Captain Haven designed it in such a way as to deposit himself on the other side while besetting his assailants with traps. When the left lever is up, the dart traps are enabled. When the center lever is up,

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the door is locked. If the right lever is moved up when the door is unlocked, the wall containing the door swivels 180 degrees. Anyone in the five-foot square in front of the door is deposited into area **9**, while three skeletons tightly packed on the other side of the door are deposited into this area. When the wall spins, the switches reset to their initial positions and the poison dart traps reset.

Creatures: Once everyone in area **8** has been killed, the skeletons return to the square by the door so that they are returned to area **9** when the door spins again.

Traps: If the left switch is up after the wall spins (and before the trap resets), one poison dart fires from the east and west walls flanking the square in front of the door. The closest figures to each are targeted.

Poison Dart Trap (2): CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged (1d4 plus poison, dart); poison (bloodroot, DC 12 Fortitude save resists, 0/1d4 Con plus 1d3 Wis); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 18.

Human Skeleton (3): hp 6; *Monster Manual* 226.

The East Door (EL 1)

In the center of the east door is a circular arrangement of ten stone protrusions, each engraved with a number. Just above these, dust covers engraved text.

Wiping away the dust reveals the phrase "Five men's fingers, five men's toes," written in Common. A successful DC 20 Listen check reveals the faint grinding sound of wood on stone in the area behind the door.

Traps: The door's ten stone "buttons" bear the numbers 17, 19, 27, 28, 36, 38, 41, 57, 71, and 76. To unlock the door, the sum of depressed buttons must total 100 (17, 19, 28, and 36). If the depressed buttons total more than 100, the trap is triggered and the buttons and the trap reset. Disabling the trap prevents it from triggering but does not unlock the door. Once unlocked, the door opens and closes easily on a pivot.

Poison Dart Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset (3 times only); Atk +8 ranged (1d4 plus poison, dart); poison (bloodroot, DC 12 Fortitude save resists, 0/1d4 Con plus 1d3 Wis); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

The South Door

Two angelic statues gaze at a spot on the south wall, about six feet off the ground, containing two slightly inset, one-inch-diameter circles. Each has a deep, knife-thin, vertical cut.

When the serrated blades of the daggers found in areas **5** and **9** are inserted into these cuts and turned like keys, a secret door slides open.

The Hole in the Ceiling

A five-foot-diameter tunnel ascends five feet into the ceiling before proceeding horizontally in a northeasterly direction.

This is the terminus of the secret entrance to Haven's treasure bunker, and is how the spider eaters got in and surprised the aranea community. The tunnel runs for 600 feet before emerging at the foot of a large tree in Husk Forest (area **14**).

9. Balancing Act (EL 2)

A five-foot-wide hallway proceeds thirty feet before coming to a junction. After five feet, this hall has no floor, only an open pit filled with liquid. Bridging the pit is a twelve-inch-wide wooden beam that spans twenty feet before coming to another platform. The air smells acidic.

A successful DC 10 Balance check is required to move across the beam. Anyone that falls into the two-foot-deep acid bath below takes 1d6 points of damage per round. A DC 10 Climb check is necessary to climb back up onto the beam.

Around the corner to the right, a cruelly serrated, bejeweled dagger hangs on the wall. A small wooden chest sits on a pedestal below it.

Creatures: If the chest is touched, the upper halves of the two walls flanking the beam rise into the ceiling and two skeletons on each side fire arrows at any PCs in their line of sight. The chest itself is empty.

Traps: The wall-raising mechanism can be disarmed as if it were a trap.

Raise Wall Trap: Mechanical touch trigger; no reset; wall raises; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

Human Skeleton (4): hp 6; *Monster Manual* 226.

Treasure: The bejeweled dagger is identical to the one in area **5**.

10. Fear Wheel (EL 3)

In the center of this square room stands a thick wooden pole set loosely into pits in the floor and ceiling.

A lever on the western wall opens and closes the western door. The eastern door has a keyhole and is locked (Open Lock DC 20). The lock is under the effect of a *Leomund's trap* spell.

Spell poles were popular temple features in the remote lands where Captain Haven pillaged. He brought one here and arranged for skeletons to turn it. The skeletons turn the pole slowly by leaning into protruding wooden spokes as they circle it. As long as it's rotating, glyphs and sigils glow on its highly lacquered surface.

Stone door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28.

Creatures: While two skeletons (the minimum required) turn the spell pole, four more appear from behind it and attack the PCs. If a skeleton is prevented from turning the pole, another skeleton mindlessly takes its place. Each round the 750 lb, 2-foot-thick pole is turned, a *cause fear* spell affects a random target within 30 feet.

Spell Pole Trap: CR 1; magic device; revolution trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*cause fear*, 1st level wizard, DC 12 Will save partial); Disable Device DC 20.

Human Skeleton (6): hp 6; *Monster Manual* 226.

11. Far East Entrance

In the southeast corner of the floor is a web-lined hole large enough to accommo-

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date a human. Sitting in an ancient web on the north wall is a dead, dog-sized spider covered in fibrous white mold.

In an effort to bypass his queen's magical lock on area 7's doors, an ambitious aranea dug a tunnel behind the waterfall in area **6** up to this room. After punishing him severely, the queen cast *Leomund's trap* on this room's east door, and araneas frightened of the trap (and the queen) have been deterred ever since. The monstrous spider that crawled into this area and died of starvation has been left as a grisly warning to trespassing aranea children. The web tube in the floor is just big enough for a Medium creature to crawl into. Its short vertical lengths require a DC 0 Climb check.

Stone door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 24; *Leomund's trap* (CL 3rd).

12. Treasure Room (EL 4)

A short hallway leads into a large room. Ten carved figureheads from foreign ships are set into the floor in two rows of five. Removed from the bows they once graced, these exotic wooden women now lean in unison toward the door, their hands at their sides, painted hair flowing and heads raised proudly. At their feet, brass-bound sea chests cover much of the floor. Paintings of foreign kings and glorious battles lean against tall silver ewers and numerous rolled tapestries.

This is what remains of Captain Haven's treasure trove. All ten of the sea chests are locked. The figureheads are those of the ten most impressive ships Haven ever boarded.

Treasure Chests (10): Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30.

Traps: The 5-foot square of hallway immediately after the secret door entrance is trapped with a *bestow curse* trap. Anyone so cursed becomes frightened in the presence of a ship's figurehead, fleeing from the sight of one and unable to board any ship bearing one. The chest closest to the door has a *burning hands* trap.

Bestow Curse Trap: CR 4; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset (1 minute delay); spell effect (*bestow curse*, 5th level cleric, DC 14 Will save negates); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

***Burning Hands* Trap:** CR 2; magic device; mechanical proximity trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*burning hands*, 1st level wizard, 1d4 fire, DC 11 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

Arianne

Treasure: In total, this room contains 6,500 gp, 4,500 sp, 5,000 cp, and 20 10-gp gems split evenly between the 10 chests for an average value of 720 gp each. In addition, seven bejeweled but mismatched personal items, such as flasks, bracelets, and necklaces, are each worth 150 gp. Three bulky paintings (200 gp each) lean against two large silver ewers (150 gp each), and seven tapestries made rotten and worthless by the damp and vermin lie on the floor. Each ship's figurehead weighs 700 lbs and is worth little individually, though what price the whole collection (with its legendary provenance) could fetch at a major metropolitan auction is left up to you.

13. The Missing

A strong red light can be seen issuing from within the web-lined tunnels leading into this cavern, and with a successful DC 15 Listen check a PC can hear whispers.

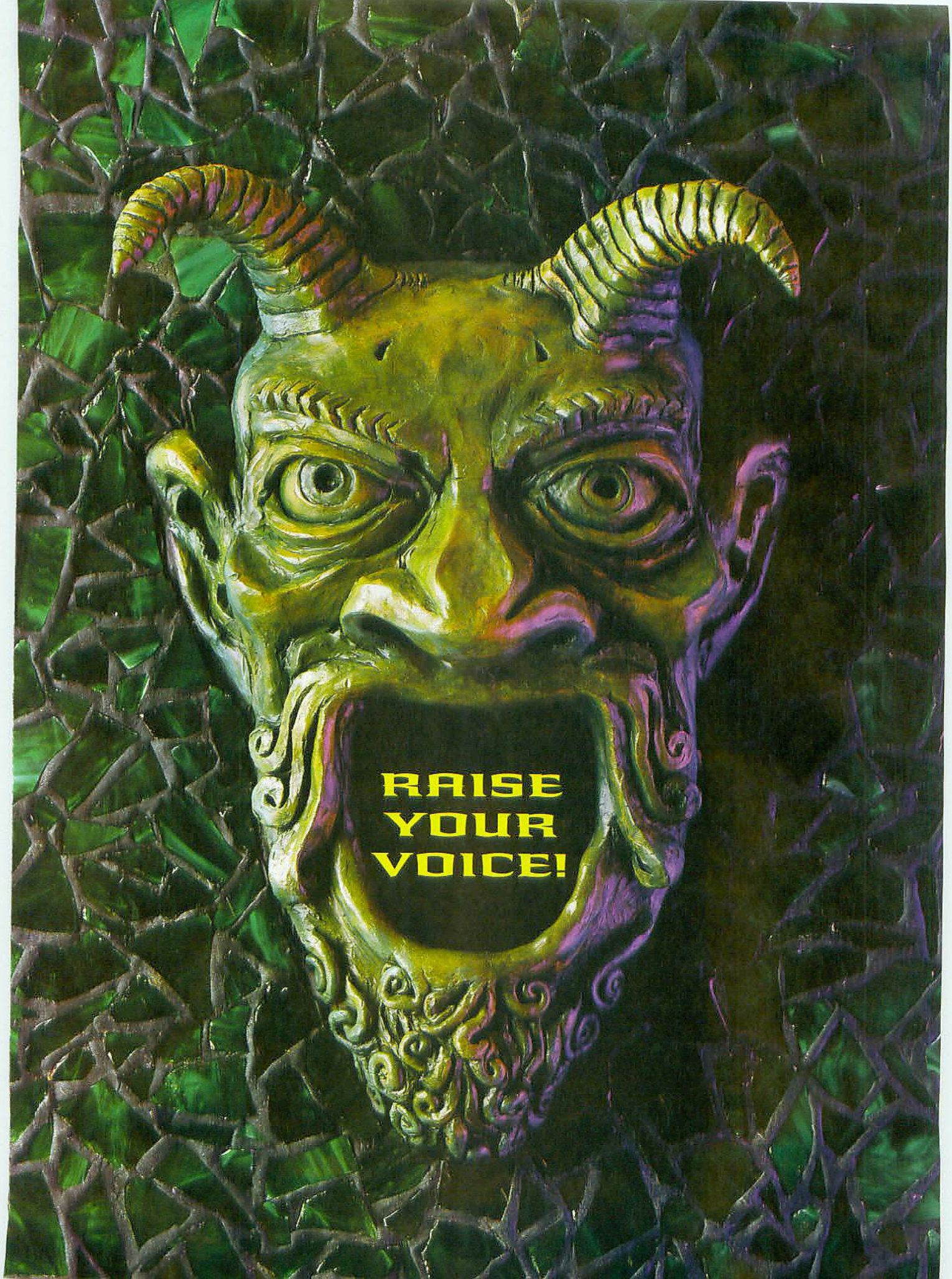
A thick red light issues from the heads of giant beetles lying in an unmoving pile on the floor of this rocky cavern. Propped up against the walls are rows upon rows of cocoons ranging from two to six feet tall.

A comely, if disheveled, aranea in human form stands in the far corner. Her clothes are tattered and dirty, and her expression thinly masks her trepidation. Behind her stand eight children, their small faces presenting a mixture of fear, curiosity, and hope.

The woman's name is Arianne. The aranea queen charged her with hiding these aranea children here, since the spider eaters could not fit into the small web tube leading to this food storage room and there is ample food and fresh water. The cocoons contain incapacitated giant bees, giant bombardier beetles, and monstrous centipedes.

Arianne pretends to be a missing Haven-Fara villager, taken by monstrous spiders in the night. She explains that during a diversion created by large hornet creatures, she and the children escaped into a lake, found a tunnel behind a waterfall, and crawled up here. She says that the kids must be from some other settlement, as they will not talk to her, perhaps out of fright. In reality, they are obeying her command not to speak without her permission—the children are noncombatants, and run and hide if the PCs attack. Arianne is friendly and even apologetic when the PCs ask questions, claiming that, due to the horror of it all, she "can't remember" the answers. She appears brave, kind, and motherly, and asks the PCs if they can spare any food for the children.

No one from Haven-Fara recognizes Arianne. If the PCs challenge Arianne's account of events, she says only that Westin will vouch for her and sticks to her story, no matter how implausible it becomes.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Arianne's priorities are to get the children out of the nest safely, preserve the aranea secret, save the queen, save other araneas, and save herself (in that order). She probes the PCs with questions about their intentions, what they've seen, and how they think they can all escape.

If Arianne sees the aranea queen's signet ring, she inquires where the PCs got it. If they say the queen gave it to them, Arianne still pretends not to recognize it (though a DC 20 Sense Motive check detects that she does) in case the queen was in spider form when she bestowed it. Nevertheless, her attitude becomes friendly, as the ring is a sign of the queen's favor. If, however, it appears that the PCs killed the queen and stole the ring, she merely feigns friendliness. In this case, Arianne assumes the mantle of aranea queen, watches the PCs very carefully, and vows to kill them at a later date. She assumes the PCs do not know the aranea secret and therefore still believes that they are the best hope for the children's escape.

If Arianne is genuinely friendly and sure that the PCs know the secret, she retracts her web of lies, speaks candidly about everything, and allows the children to thank the queen's saviors. Arianne asks each PC to protect the aranea secret for the benefit of the children.

Arianne suggests the PCs take the children out via area **11** above. She claims the door there appeared trapped, but the kids can't climb out any other way. She begs the PCs to deliver the children to Westin in Haven-Fara, and once out, Arianne instructs the weeping children to go with the PCs while she returns to rescue other missing Haven-Fara townsfolk. A DC 10 Diplomacy check convinces Arianne to accompany the PCs back to town, on the condition that at least one of them promises to come back and help rescue any remaining wounded araneas afterward.

Arianne, female aranea: CR 4; hp 22; *Monster Manual* 15.

14. The Secret Entrance

In the ground near the foot of a large tree is a five-foot-wide hole surrounded by small piles of dirt and web-wrapped leaves. Eight feet down, the hole levels off into a tunnel.

This is the secret entrance to Haven's treasure bunker depicted on Galen's map. The tunnel proceeds 600 feet before dropping through the ceiling of area **8**.

Chapter Three: Haven-Fara Revisited

If the PCs haven't been to the aranea queen's chamber in area **5** or have not met Arianne in area **13**, feel free to allow them to return to Haven-Fara to recover their resources and regroup. Other than the Haven-Fara townsfolk being disappointed by the PCs returning empty-handed, things are generally as described earlier in the adventure.

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Welcome Back (EL 3)

As soon as the PCs approach the town bearing treasure or rescued children, two of Galen's thugs meet them just out of view of the buildings, approach with amiable expressions, then fire a round of crossbow bolts at the party and close with drawn daggers. A third thug snipes the PCs with a light crossbow from a branch 20 feet up a tree. Their orders are to kill the party and any witnesses and claim any treasure. They ignore the children and any other noncombatants until after the last PC is killed. If they are captured, the thugs blame Galen and fully divulge his actions.

Upon entering Haven-Fara, the PCs discover that much has changed. Immediately noticeable is that the western hemisphere of the town's webbing has been burned away. All thatched homes on that side of town are now roofless. Any small monstrous spiders that the PCs did not dispatch before they left now crawl up and into these homes and roam the town in groups of 1d4.

Harc's wife and one of Galen's thugs had a heated argument over looting the general store, a brawl which left her dead, the thug wounded (3 hp), and Harc conscious but too weak to move. After a vengeful Keel threatened Galen directly, Galen's patience broke and he declared martial law, forcing citizens into their homes and nailing the doors shut. It was during this struggle that a mishandled torch caught the webbing on fire.

Galen's Thugs (3): hp 7; see page 19.

Over a Barrel (EL 5)

At the jail, Galen's thugs stuffed Westin inside a barrel that once contained sugar, nailed the lid on, and covered it with a thick wool blanket—a standard (if severe) Haven-Fara punishment. Westin was not released after the usual three-hour limit, however, and still suffers inside the humid interior. To ensure that no one comes to his aid, Galen has locked his last spider eater inside the jail as well.

If the PCs do not free Westin within four hours of their return, he suffocates and dies. Otherwise, he is fatigued and retains 1d4 hit points. If the PCs managed to rescue the aranea children, Westin is helpful and will join the PCs in combat. Otherwise his attitude is friendly. Once Westin sees that spider eaters are involved, he tells the PCs that Galen once boasted of using the beasts as mounts in bandit operations.

Spider Eater: hp 42; *Monster Manual* 234.

Galen's Last Stand (EL 4)

Galen is polishing glasses in the *Good Fortune* when the PCs arrive. If confronted about his actions, he freely admits to both his attempt to clear the nest and his declaration of martial law "for the good of the town." He feigns ignorance about the thugs' attack, reasoning that they were probably worried about protecting the secret of Haven-Fara's location. If the party seems confrontational, Galen informs them that they can't be allowed to leave Haven-Fara after discovering its location. He offers them a chance to stay and help conduct pirate raids as his chief lieutenants. If they refuse, he attacks.

Captain Galen: hp 24; see page 18.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs took the aranea children to Haven-Fara without Arianne, Westin takes charge of them. If he is dead, the children remain in the PCs' hands until Arianne is satisfied that the nest is safe and returns. The children, who naturally want to stay in Haven-Fara, run away if it appears that the PCs wish to force them onto a ship. If any spider eaters remain in the nest, Arianne asks the PCs to return and exterminate them.

If the PCs were originally hired to contract a pirate raid on a rival merchant, Keel and Harc, now the senior council members, are happy to oblige, and agree to make such a hunt a top priority when their pirate brethren return in a few weeks.

It is critical to the livelihood of anyone the PCs leave behind that the location of Haven-Fara remains a secret. This is especially true for the araneas who live nearby. Whether or not the PCs know the aranea secret, Arianne asks them to vouchsafe the location of Haven-Fara for the benefit of the children. Both it and the aranea secret could easily become recurring adventure hooks in your campaign.

Tim and Eileen Connors live with their daughter Faith in Connecticut. They are first time Dungeon *writers and lifetime D&D players. Long live the MEIT party!*

Scaling the Adventure

This adventure is designed for four 1st-level characters. To scale the adventure for larger or more experienced parties (up to 4th level), raise the size of all monstrous vermin by one category, add a rat swarm to the lake (area **6**), and raise Galen's fighter class level and his thugs' rogue class level to the average PC character level.

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Tealpeck's Flood

BY PETER VINOGRADOV
BY MATT DIXON
BY ROB LAZZARETTI
ANY SETTING | MID-LEVEL (6TH–12TH) | DUNGEON CRAWL

A house in ruins, a church in scandal, and a watery grave—these are the legacies of Tealpeck's plan to free himself from a diabolic pact forged in blood decades ago. Now, equipped with only a handful of clues and a few rickety boats, someone must navigate Tealpeck's dungeon canals, reconstruct the events of his demise, and uncover the means to annul the deadly bargain and free Tealpeck's heir from a terrible doom.

"Tealpeck's Flood" is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure for four 6th-level PCs. The "Duchy" referred to in this adventure is the Duchy of Ulek in the GREYHAWK campaign setting, but the adventure can be placed anywhere where mountains and rivers are found. References to the church of Wee Jas can be replaced with any well-known church in your campaign.

Adventure Background

It only took the wizard Tealpeck five short years to build his castle and dominate the local countryside. Though he publicly credited his success to Wee Jas, in fact he owed his good fortune to a clandestine pact he forged with a pit fiend known as Ibex the Pretender. In exchange for wealth, a castle, and power beyond his own means, Tealpeck promised to sacrifice six magical beasts and seven magical items, all specified by the devil. Until these sacrifices were made, Ibex would maintain dominance over the wizard and his estate. In his thirst for power, the wizard neglected to fully research all the required items, and later learned that the last of them, a certain dwarven battleaxe, would not be forged for at least six centuries.

With this discovery, Tealpeck began to secretly consult sages and mystics, all of whom agreed that to escape his pact, Tealpeck would have to trick Ibex into accepting a powerful item of good enchantment; such a disgrace would cause the devil to fall from Hell's favor, thus becoming incapable of enforcing the agreement.

Since the wizard already owned, and was slated to sacrifice, a *book of vile darkness*, he hired mercenaries to obtain a *book of exalted deeds*, which he disguised with a powerful illusion. He then placed both books in his library and sent a message to the pit fiend that his next sacrifice was ready.

Tealpeck's imp familiar, meanwhile, learned of the plan, and seized the opportunity to ingratiate himself with Ibex. He secretly switched the two books, now indistinguishable even to Tealpeck, so

that the wizard's attempt at betrayal would unknowingly give Ibex the evil tome after all. Sadly for the imp, Tealpeck was too afraid to carry out his original plan. He eventually decided to offer what he thought was the evil book. In desperation, the imp triggered one of the dungeon's traps and managed to drown the wizard before the sacrifice could take place.

Two decades later, Darin Fothudsvor (a priest of Wee Jas) claimed he was Tealpeck's sole heir. After a lengthy debate, he managed to prove his claim, changed his last name, and settled into his new home. Shortly after he moved in, a dark thundercloud settled over the stronghold. The castle walls became red as blood, and the river below grew black and filthy. Shepherds heard screams from the lofty fortress, and tales spread of caravans being ravaged by giants.

Now the persistent thundercloud is slowly ruining the locals' crops, and the townsfolk have grown increasingly angry with Darin Tealpeck, not seen since he left for the castle, and the local church of Wee Jas, where the late wizard Tealpeck also worshipped. With frustrations reaching a boiling point, the local government has given the church one month to determine the source of the problem or be driven out.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs are asked to investigate the strange events centered on Castle Tealpeck, and discover what has become of its new owner, Darin Tealpeck. When they arrive, the PCs find the Castle in wretched disrepair and meet the heir, badly weakened from fighting mephits. Speaking with him, the PCs learn of a pact between the late wizard Tealpeck and a pit fiend known as Ibex the Pretender. In order to free the heir of his uncle's bargin, the PCs are asked to recover a magical tome from the library on the second level of the dungeon. As they proceed through the adventure, they discover clues about the late wizard's complex plan to undo the pact, and about his traitorous familiar, Spitwing, the imp who ultimately destroyed the wizard.

Eventually they find two magical books, the *Principia Hextori* (a *book of vile darkness*), and a *book of exalted deeds* known as *The Holy Path of Ethuknikar*. As a result of Tealpeck's plan, the books are now indistinguishable from each other, even by handling or magical detection (though they can be read, with possibly dire consequences). At worst, the PCs have a fifty-fifty chance of bringing up the right book. However, a clever party should be able to piece together enough clues along the way to reconstruct the story and determine with confidence which book is which.

Built to incorporate a number of underground springs and streams, Tealpeck's dungeon includes a network of canals that must be negotiated by swimming, flying, or using one of a number of available rowboats.

Adventure Hooks

The adventure begins as the PCs are sent to explore the mysterious Castle Tealpeck and search for its missing owner, a young devotee of Wee Jas named Darin. Here are a few ways to get them started:

- The church of Wee Jas has received an ultimatum from the local duke: fix the weather and stop the raids or be driven out. Unfortunately, the priests are just as clueless as everyone else, as the old wizard Tealpeck did not keep them informed of his plans. Reviled and shunned within their own community, they turn to outsiders for help. If the PCs have any ties to the church of Wee Jas, or if they have a reputation for solving problems, the church approaches them and asks them to investigate. They offer the party 500 gp up front, plus whatever treasure they find in the castle, if they can figure out what is going on and put a stop to it.
- The PCs come across information pertaining to the *Holy Path of Ethuknikar*, the *book of exalted deeds* that Tealpeck obtained to trick Ibex. The information states that the book was plundered from a distant land by a famous paladin, who in turn lost it in transit during a pirate attack. A recent treaty between the pirates of the Crimson Fleet and a merchant kingdom of the south has revealed that the book was sold to a wizard from the Northern Duchies nearly thirty years ago. The merchant king is looking for adventurers to travel to the region and determine what became of the artifact.
- A druid has reason to believe that the spirit of a druidic elder was long ago imprisoned within the body of a shambling mound by a malevolent and powerful herbalist. She believes the enchanted shambler was last in the custody of Nowell Tealpeck, whom she now believes has perished. She asks the PCs to find out what has happened to the wizard and whether the shambler is still in his estate.

Chapter One: The Rescue

Though he was quite powerful, Tealpeck's fame and influence were short-lived. A DC 20 Knowledge (local), Knowledge (history), or bardic knowledge check reveals the following story about Tealpeck's history. The same information can be gleaned with a DC 20 Gather Information check made in the village of Og'Vihalla.

Tealpeck's arrival in the community of Og'Vihalla was met with some excitement, as his obvious wealth promised a positive impact on the local economy. That promise never materialized, however, as the wizard's castle was constructed in only five years without any help from the local workforce.

For the next few years, the people of Og'Vihalla saw and heard little of the newcomer. He was known to be a benefactor of the church of Wee Jas, but never attended services. He came and went from his mountain abode on griffonback, scarcely glancing at the village far below.

After a decade of mysterious comings and goings, the wizard disappeared. The song of his griffons ceased, and locals assumed he came and went by teleportation. Eventually, a spate of kidnappings, caravan raids, and high profile thefts plagued the region. Suspecting Tealpeck, the people demanded action, but the duke refused to investigate, and anyone who took it upon themselves to stop the wizard were never heard from again.

Then one day the wave of crime simply ended. The people of Og'Vihalla learned to ignore the dark castle above them. Even the church of Wee Jas stopped mentioning Tealpeck's name.

No one is exactly sure how Darin Fothudsvor, a cleric of Wee Jas, managed to prove his relation to the wizard and stake a claim to the castle. Most believe that the church, thinking the wizard dead, simply wanted to seize the castle and its treasures.

There is some speculation that the wizard still lives and that the foolish cleric met a tragic end. Some say the dark cloud and mischief in the land is simply the wizard's way of making his presence known once again.

Careful questioning of the local clerics of Wee Jas reveals that the church once accepted money and favors from Tealpeck, who credited the goddess with his power and wealth. However, the wizard's money and influence soon outgrew their small church, and he began making trips to the larger cities, giving large donations to the cathedrals of the high patriarchs, who in turn sent word to the local clerics that they were to tend to all of Tealpeck's needs. The relationship ended with the disappearance of a cleric who had been called to the castle to bring healing. When the cleric did not return, the church contacted their bishop for help and was told simply, "Pray. Your brother has perished."

Castle Tealpeck

Whether engaged by the church or drawn to the castle by other circumstance, the PCs have an uneventful journey. A poorly traveled path takes them from the main road up the mountain a short distance and to the base of a massive cliff.

A pair of heavy oak doors bearing a weather-worn symbol of Wee Jas bars entry into the mountain. The left door has a large crack down its center, and both doors bulge out as though someone tried to force them open from within. It is clear that the lock mechanism is barely holding. Far above, a rampart is visible at the top of the cliff and a squat stone tower hints at the presence of a fortress built directly into the mountainside.

These doors lead to the bottom of the elevator shaft in area **3a**, the service entrance. Although the cliff initially appears sheer, cracks have developed along one side of the cliff that make it possible, if difficult (DC 20 Climb check), to scale the 300-foot vertical surface.

Double **Doors:** Wood; 12 inches thick; Hardness 5; 120 hp; Break DC 34.

Castle Features

Floor: The whole upper castle is floored in a checkerboard pattern of dark green and white marble tiles.

Walls: The walls here are carved from the gray stone of Mount Tealpeck. An intricately worked, 6-inch chestnut trim lines every corner.

Ceiling: The 15-foot vaulted ceilings of Castle Tealpeck are also carved from the mountain stone. Oak beams span the larger rooms to provide additional structural support.

Doors: Wood; 6 inches thick; Hardness 5; 60 hp; Break DC 28.

The doors are finely crafted from two layers of oak slats that are reinforced inside by an iron frame. They are rounded at the top, and sit inside iron door frames. All have iron hinges and latches, and the bedroom doors come with locks and deadbolts.

Dungeon Features

Levels: Each level is designed to slope gradually from entrance to exit. Though the distance from floor to ceiling never changes, the floor at the entrance of a level may in fact be 10 feet higher up than the floor near the exit. There is 20 feet of rock between the exit of one level and the entrance of the level below it.

Canals: The water in the dungeon is supplied by springs found near the entrance to each level. Water moves from here through the canals, and either down to another level or out a drainage chute. Unless otherwise noted, the drains and springs are covered with square iron grates that allow nothing larger than two inches to pass through. The water maintains a depth of four feet in most places, though this can rise or fall depending on circumstances noted in various areas.

Water Movement Modifiers: In the canals, boats and swimmers drift at a rate of 5 feet per round. There is no discernable current in the larger rooms.

Walls, floor, pillars, and ceiling: Nearly every surface here is hewn from the mountain rock. Any floor beneath the water is coated with a layer of sludge that makes standing difficult. PCs suffer a –2 penalty on any check for staying upright (tripping, bull rush, etc.).

The ceilings here are 14 feet from the floor, which typically leaves 10 feet between the ceiling and water's surface.

Tiled platforms: Certain surfaces in this dungeon are meant to be above water most of the time. These are covered with a thick, granular tile that is easy to stand on even when wet. Unless otherwise indicated, tiled platforms are built 4 feet 6 inches off the dungeon floor, or 6 inches above the water's surface.

Standard Doors: Stone; 4 inches thick; Hardness 8; 60 hp; Break DC 28.

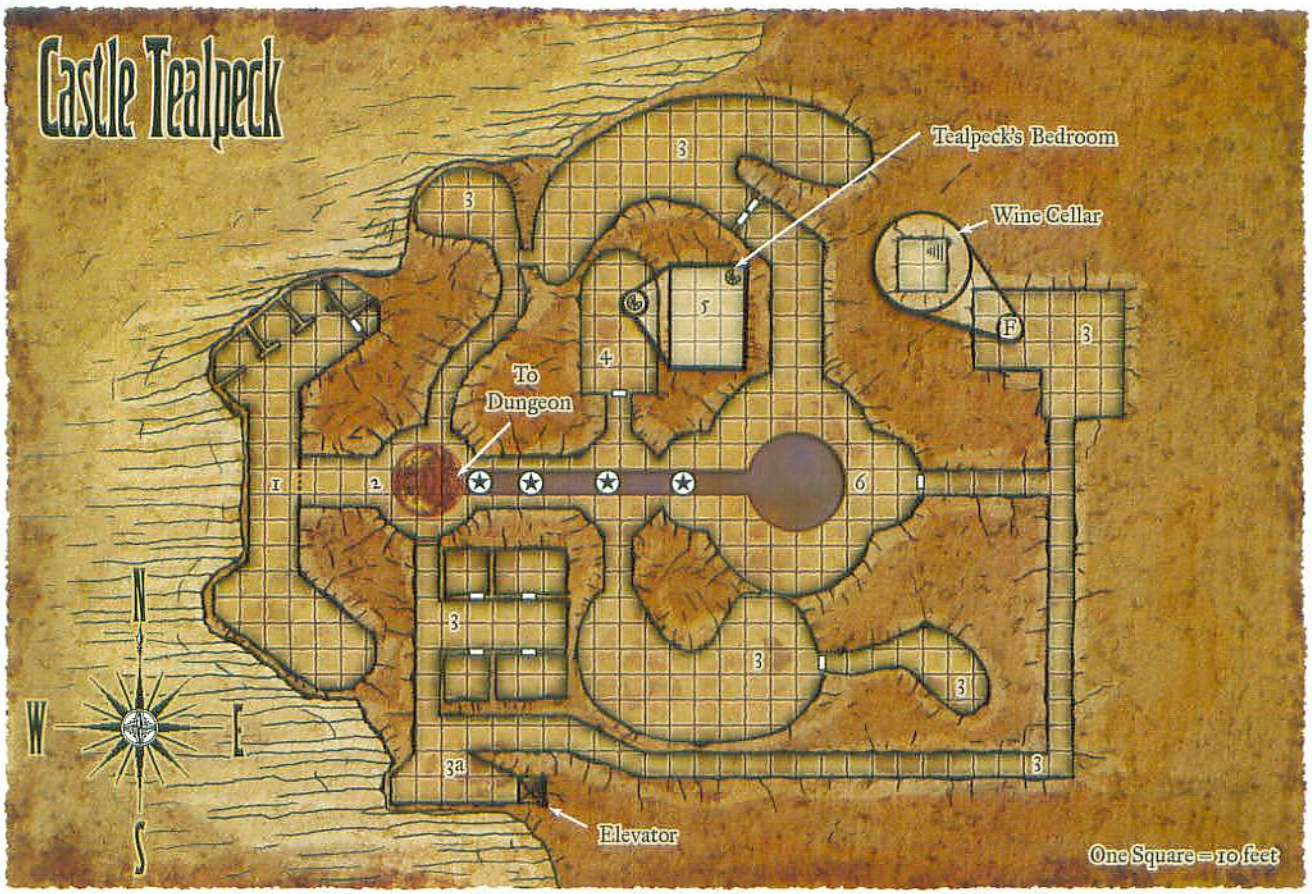
The doors in Tealpeck's dungeon swing easily in both directions on nested iron hinges. The bottom 3 feet of any door contains eight 4-inch diameter holes to allow for passage of water and piranha.

Secret doors: All secret doors in this dungeon are painstakingly carved from the same stone as the surrounding wall, making them difficult to detect (Search DC 25). Once detected, they can be popped open by removing a slender metal pin located three inches below the water's surface.

Secret levers: Secret controls for boat-lifts and other dungeon mechanisms are covered by a simple cloth that has been painted and textured to blend in with the surrounding rock. They can be found on a DC 20 Search check.

Piranha

Tealpeck spent years developing a self-sustainable ecosystem in his dungeon in which a wide variety of fresh-water fish and amphibians thrived. Though sorely depleted since Tealpeck's death, schools of piranha have thrived, and the dungeon's canals are not a safe place to dip one's toe. Anytime any of the PCs fall into the water, there is a cumulative



10% chance each round that they attract a swarm of hungry piranha. You should double this chance if there is any blood in the water.

Monsters in this dungeon are better able to spot and avoid the piranha, though they are still at risk when bleeding. If a swimming monster starts bleeding, there is a cumulative 5% chance each round that a piranha swarm arrives.

There are a total of 5 piranha swarms in the dungeon, and they are very territorial. If the PCs destroy a piranha swarm, they are at no risk of further attacks in that area until 48 hours pass, at which point the other swarms discover the unclaimed area and move in, restoring the normal chance of an encounter.

Piranha Swarm **CR 4**

N Tiny animal (aquatic, swarm)

Stormwrack 163

Init +6; **Senses** low light vision, scent; Listen +9, Spot +8

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 13

hp 47 (8 HD); half damage from slashing and piercing

Immune swarm traits

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

Spd swim 40 ft.

Melee swarm 3d6

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** —

Atk Options distraction (DC 15)

Abilities Str 4, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Toughness

Skills Hide +10, Listen +9, Spot +8, Swim +5

Distraction (Ex) Any living creature vulnerable to a piranha swarm's damage that begins its turn with a swarm in its square must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

1. Main Entrance

A large balcony runs nearly the width of the castle and is surrounded by a low stone railing. The northern end of the balcony is roofed, and contains several wooden stalls. At the center of the balcony is a pair of large oak doors bearing the faded symbol of Wee Jas. One of the doors is slightly ajar. The castle's stone facade is eroding as vines and moss creep over it. The stone walls are awash with a faint, almost crimson light, similar to the light of the setting sun, yet the light has no obvious source.

These stalls once housed Tealpeck's griffons. The creatures have long since abandoned the castle, but feathers and bits of eggshell can be found lying about inside the stalls.

2. Dungeon Entrance

This circular room stands at the junction of the main hallway and a few smaller corridors. Several small lights, like candles, are visible from down the main hallway, and a faint hissing sound is also present. A large mosaic of the holy symbol of Wee Jas decorates the floor. Four torch sconces surrounding this symbol *light* the room.

In addition to the hissing, the PCs also hear the faint cries of a human voice

shortly after they enter. This is Darin Tealpeck, holed up in the castle study (area 4), fending off the approach of several angry steam mephits.

The mosaic of Wee Jas hides the principal entrance to the dungeon, using an elaborate patchwork of shifting floor plates and an illusion. This can be dispelled only from the sacrificial temple (area 6).

If dispelled, the area becomes a flowing stream through which boats can pass down a tunnel and into the dungeon.

The water in the tunnel moves swiftly, winding around a few subtle curves before ending in area 7.

3. Uninhabited Rooms

Several chambers in Tealpeck's Castle are no longer inhabited; these areas have little of interest within them today.

3a. Castle Service Area

Beyond the weathered oak doors sits a pile of smashed wood and rope. Above, a large shaft ascends hundreds of feet. It is clear that the wood and rope are the remains of a hand-powered elevator that once serviced the castle.

Two priests of Wee Jas who visited Darin Tealpeck were both killed here by a gang of mephits. To ensure that no one else suffered their fate, Darin destroyed this elevator.

The shaft leads to a roofed, irregular patio. At the other end of the patio an open door leads into the castle.

4. Study

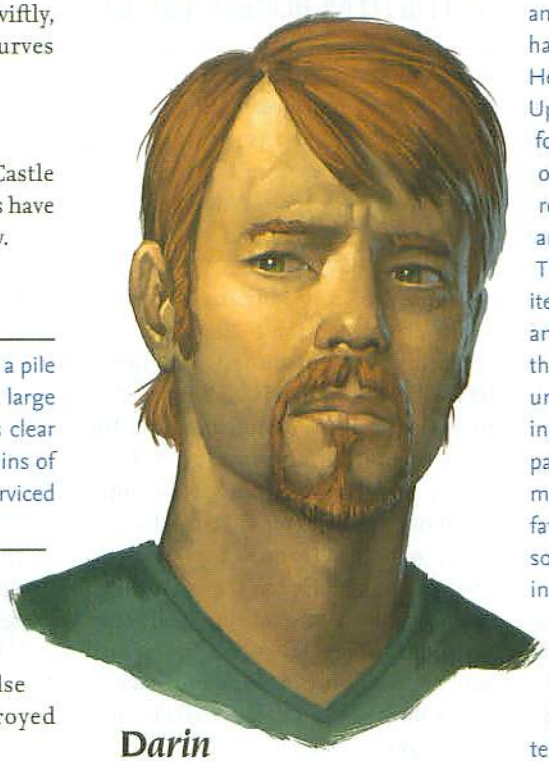
Hot steam fills the room, carrying with it the odor of decaying parchment. Cases of books line the walls, while an oak table lies smashed near the entrance. At the back of the room, a spiral staircase winds up to the floor above.

Creatures: Three summoned steam mephitis hover above the ruined table. Beyond these, Darin Tealpeck (LN male human cleric 3) scurries about on his hands and knees, feverishly trying to keep the steam mephits at bay with a scroll of *magic circle against evil*.

As soon as the PCs enter, the steam mephits turn their attention away from the beleaguered cleric and toward the new arrivals.

Steam Mephits (3): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 184.

Tactics: The mephits concentrate their breath weapons on melee characters, then follow up with claw attacks. The mephits flee if they are reduced to fewer than half their hit points. Once away, they head for the sacrificial pool, through which they return to their native plane.



Darin

Development: Once the mephit threat is neutralized, Darin thanks the PCs profusely. He introduces himself, and explains that he has been fending off mephits while searching through his uncle's journals in the hopes of foiling his family's pact with Ibex. After the mephitis are defeated, Darin tells the PCs the following story:

Ever since I arrived, my inheritance has brought nothing but misery to me and everyone around me. I destroyed the elevator to prevent anyone else from sharing the fate of those poor acolytes, and I had almost given up hope—thank the goddess you came! I'd better start at the beginning.

My first night at the castle, I was troubled by evil dreams, and I awoke to the sound of horrible cries accompanied by wicked laughter. When those steamy little mephits burst through the door I thought I was still dreaming, until I felt their searing breath upon my face. They dragged me down to the temple, past the bodies of my murdered servants, and placed me before the great pool.

Out of the steaming mist arose a great and horrible figure, transparent, as if he had one foot still in the nether planes. He pointed to a thick and leathery scroll. Upon it I read the pact that my uncle had forged with this great fiend. It bore a list of all the power and influences he would receive alongside a list of all the creatures and items he would offer in exchange. The words glowed with fire, save for two items that my uncle never paid. I read on, and learned that if he willfully violated the agreement, the devil would, in my uncle's very body, roam the earth, sowing infernal terror. At the bottom of the page was my uncle's own signature—the mark with which he had sealed both our fates. And finally, beside his name, I saw something I had only seen once before in an ancient tome during my seminary days. It was the mark of an infamous and hateful pit fiend, known in Hell as Ibex the Pretender. As I read it, the scroll burst into flames, and the laughter of the devil and his mephits rose to a maddening cacophony. When it ended, I was alone, surrounded by steam and blue light. The symbols of Wee Jas that used to line the temple were gone, and upon the walls were ancient and evil runes.

My uncle died fefore honoring the vile pact he'd forged with this devil, and now the debt has fallen to me! Please, for the good of the world, you must help me find a way to escape this pact and send the devil back to Hell where he belongs!

After he relates his story, Darin pauses to answer any questions the PCs might have. Here are answers to the PCs' most likely questions.

Why haven't you returned to town to get help? "As soon as I left the temple, I

headed straight for the elevator, hoping I might flee this place and seek the aid of my church. Yet I fell terribly ill the moment I stepped out onto the patio, and only recovered once I had crawled back inside the castle walls. I realized then that if Ibex wasn't going to let me out, at least one of the remaining sacrifices had to be somewhere inside."

What are the two items that your farther still owes Ibex? "One is an evil book called the *Principia Hextori*, the other is the battleaxe of the twelfth patriarch of Kibnet."

What do you know about these two items? "After I failed to escape the castle, I came here hoping to piece together the chain of events that prevented my uncle from fulfilling the pact. After days of searching, I discovered two books that shed light on the situation. The first, concerning the *Principia Hextori*, is here. Evidently, it is a book so evil and powerful that if Ibex were to claim it, he would gain the power to walk freely between Hell and the Material Plane. The other is a genealogy of the dwarven house of Kibnet, and if I understand it correctly, their current patriarch is only the seventh! The axe Ibex requires won't be forged for centuries! My uncle must have realized this, and must have known that unless he did something, Ibex would forever control him. I believe now that Ibex never intended for the pact to end. Once he had the *Principia Hextori*, he would come forth into our plane, and keep my uncle as his servant."

How did you come to be trapped here? "I believe Ibex has grown impatient. Just this morning, he sent his mephits to drag me back to the sacrificial pool. There, they placed me in front of a heavy tome. I only glanced at it, but I believe it unlocks the doorway to this castle's dungeon, where the *Principia Hextori* is undoubtedly stored. While the mephits were arguing among themselves I ran back here and cast a *magic circle against evil* to ward them off. The magic was almost spent and the mephits were about to get me. Praise the goddess you arrived when you did!"

How do you propose that we free you from this pact? "I believe my uncle came up with a plan to thwart Ibex before he died. If you can discover what he was planning, you might be able to turn the pact against Ibex. I think there is more information in my uncle's old bedroom upstairs, but it's guarded by three mephits and I haven't been able to get into his desk there. If you can drive off the mephits, that would be a good place to start. Of course, you also might try looking in the castle dungeon—there are undoubtedly secrets hidden there, but I daren't risk looking there myself."

5. Tealpeck's Bedroom (EL 6)

An enormous amount of steam clouds this room. A large four-poster bed, its frame and posts warped and its sheets scorched in places, stands across the room. Beside the bed sits a large cabinet and a desk, both of which appear scorched as well.

When the imp Spitwing described Tealpeck's deception to Ibex, his presentation was disjointed and hopelessly lacking in detail. The more Ibex pressed the imp for information, the more incohrent the imp grew until finally Ibex gave up. Ibex knows nothing about the *Holy Path of Ethuknikar*, but is still wary that Tealpeck may have had a workable plan. He has therefore taken the precaution of guarding Tealpeck's bedroom, where he knows the wizard kept some of his notes and journals.

The desk has four drawers, all of which are locked. Over the last few weeks, steam from the mephits has caused all of the drawers to warp and pop open, unleashing the *fire traps* that once protected them.

Creatures: The three mephits here give no thought to any scuffle they may hear in the study below. In fact, when the PCs enter, the mephits remain heavily engrossed in their own bickering. Unless the PCs attack them or fiddle with the furniture in the room, the mephits completely ignore the intrusion. If they end up fighting, they use their breath weapons first, following up with their claws.

Steam Mephits (3): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 184.

Treasure: The cabinet is difficult to open due to warped doors, but contains a fine collection of tunics and robes all woven with threads of silver and gold. None are magical, but the collection is worth 300 gp.

Inside the desk, two of the drawers contain stationery (12 sheets of high quality vellum, 3 quills, and vials of octopus ink sealed with wax). The third is empty, and the fourth contains a flat wooden box that holds two pieces of correspondence pertaining to Tealpeck's plot.

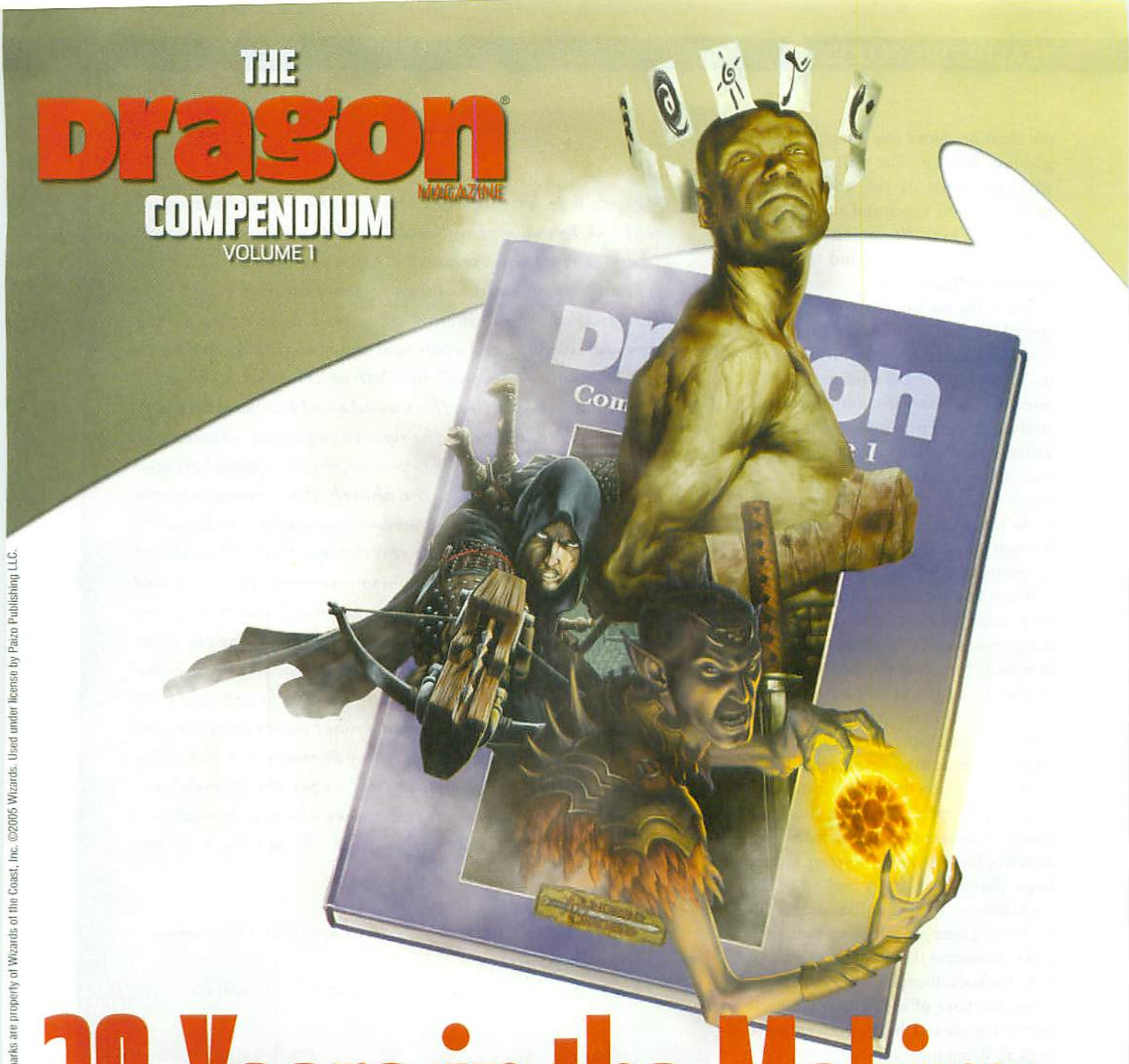
The first is from the captain of a well-known group of pirates calling themselves the Crimson Fleet. They have made a comfortable niche for themselves through bribes and favors to local governments. Through backchannels, Tealpeck convinced the church of Heironeous that the *Holy Path of Ethuknikar* was being sought after by a powerful wizard, and that it needed to be moved to the central church for safekeeping. Once he discovered the route they would use to transport the book, he commissioned the pirates to retrieve it for him. A DC 20 Knowledge (history) or bardic knowledge check is enough to recognize Captain Arnesto as a famous pirate from about 30 years back.

The second note is from an adventurer Tealpeck commissioned to find doppelganger skins, an important component in the permanent illusion spell he used to disguise the *Holy Path of Ethuknikar* as the *Principia Hextori*. A DC 25 Spellcraft check allows a PC to recognize that doppelganger hides are often used in powerful illuson magic.

6. Sacrificial Temple

Large runes cover the walls of this circular chamber. Among them, lamp sconces in the shape of demon claws jut out and emit a cold blue flame. The shadowy contours of a large pool and a cloth-draped table can be discerned through the flickering blue light. Upon the table lies a thick, open book. Beside the pool are three wooden boats, each large enough to carry an oarsman and two passengers

When the oil lamps on the walls of this temple are filled with regular oil,



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the chamber looks like a temple to the goddess Wee Jas. The walls are lined with paintings of the goddess and of the greatest sages and mystics that have served her. The pool in the center is calm and meditative, and the water appears endlessly deep.

When the oil lamps are filled with a special preparation of snake oil and imp's blood (as they are now), their light dispels the idyllic illusion and a shrine to Ibex is revealed. The stones that form the central pool are covered with moss and the water within is swirling, black, and steaming. The pool is now a portal, and Ibex can use it to accept sacrifices and send forth mephits to do his bidding. The devil cannot pass through the sacrificial pool himself, unless he receives the *Principia Hextori*.

When Darin Tealpeck first moved in, Ibex called on Spitwing to fill and light the lamps, so that he could "greet" the new heir. Now that the pool has been activated, the lamps continue to burn with a bluish flame (even if the oil is removed), and only Ibex himself can close the connection between planes.

The book upon the table radiates illusion magic. Upon inspection, the pages appear to contain daily prayers to the goddess Wee Jas. When read, however, certain large, illuminated letters peel off of the page, taking a solid, disk-like, and metallic form. There are a total of four such disks. As soon as the last of these is taken from the book, four glowing runes appear along the floor of the hallway connecting the temple and the dungeon entrance (area 2). When turned upside down, each of the four letter disks matches one of these glowing runes. PCs with Knowledge (religion) or who speak Infernal recognize that the runes spell out the name Ibex (Darin Tealpeck recognizes them at once). When each disk is set on top of its corresponding rune, the floor parts in a 10-foot-wide channel, revealing a flowing river between the pool and the dungeon entrance in area 2.

The central pool also forms the top part of the dungeon boatlift, and thus contains hidden levers along the inside rim. However, this level of the boatlift is extremely dangerous. Anyone breaking the surface of the water (whether they fall in from above

Mister Tealpeck,

This note is to let you know that on the 4th of Reaping, at great risk to many of my vessels and their fine lieutenants, I did secure at your request, a certain chest, borne by the dreaded Ship of Light, under the command of the Paladin Krehufnakut. At significant expense, I have defeated the traps and wards placed upon said chest, and have verified its contents as including one "Holy Path of Ethuknikar." Whereas the paladin transporting this valued asset has been forced to take up new residence in the watery deep, and whereas the loss of this asset and the ship bearing it will no doubt present certain inconveniences to the church of Heironeous in the south, and whereas these inconveniences are likely to translate to renewed patrols and trade restrictions that will no doubt present, in themselves, certain inconveniences to myself and to the entire Crimson Fleet, I regret that I must triple my initial demand, to more properly reflect the value of the asset I have secured on your behalf, and to defray the anticipated increase in business costs for our southerly activities. As previously agreed, I will personally meet your representative in the village of Torst on the last day of Harvester to finalize this transaction. Please ensure that, as per the terms of our agreement, your representative comes alone, unarmed, and bearing adequate funds to complete the purchase of our service.

Signed this day, the twelfth of Reaping in the common year five sixty-six,

Captain Gianni Arnesto

RECEIPT FOR GOODS AND SERVICES
PER YOUR REQUEST, I HAVE PREPARED THIS RECEIPT FOR OUR TRANSACTION LAST MONTH. I HAVE TO SAY, I DON'T USUALLY DO RECEIPTS FOR THIS KIND OF WORK, SO I HOPE THIS IS ALL RIGHT AND PROPER. HOPE THOSE HIDES WORK OUT FOR YOU. PLEASE CALL AGAIN IF YOU NEED ANYTHING ELSE.

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REGARDS,
FATLEY OBRAGGA, CREEPHUNTER.

Boats

The boats in this dungeon are well made but old, and as such have begun to deteriorate. Each boat can hold four passengers, including one oarsman (each boat is equipped with 2 oars). The boats are flat-bottomed, eight feet long, and four feet wide. Each has a thick keel with an iron hook set into the stern (for triggering the trap in area **16**). During the adventure they might be tossed, smashed, and stopped.

Boats: wooden vehicle; Hardness 5; 15 hp.

Rowing: A typical rower can propel one of these boats at 10 feet per round in still water. Rowers willing to strain at the oars can make the boats move at double speed, but there is a cumulative 5% chance each round that the oars break under the strain.

Capsizing: A Medium or larger opponent may swim under or near a boat and attempt to capsize it. It takes a DC 10 Strength check to capsize the boat. Add 2 to the DC for every 50 pounds of cargo the boat is carrying. If the check succeeds, the boat is capsized and the occupants automatically fall into the water. If the check fails, the boat remains upright, but each of the occupants must make a successful Reflex save (use the attacker's Strength check result as the DC) or lose their next action. If the Reflex save fails by 5 or more, the occupant is tossed from the boat. Attempting to capsize a boat is a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

Sinking: If a rowboat is brought below 7 hit points, its speed is reduced by five feet. A rowboat reduced to 0 hit points sinks, although a DC 15 Profession (sailor) check can keep the boat afloat for one round. This check increases by +4 each round until the rowboat is restored to at least 1 hit point or it sinks.

Repairing a boat: With the proper tools (such as those that can be found in area **11**), a Craft (carpentry) check can repair damage to a rowboat. For every point by which the check result exceeds 19, 1 hit point is restored to the boat. Each check requires 1 minute of work. A make whole spell repairs 2d6 + caster level hit points of damage to a damaged boat. If a rowboat is reduced to 0 hit points, it must be rebuilt entirely.

The Boatlift

The boatlift is a sealable chamber that allows boat movement between area **6** of the castle and area **8** of the dungeon below. Water is supplied through the bottom of the lift by a large intake from a mountain lake above. Also at the bottom of the lift is a drainage gate. The lift is controlled by any of three different levers (one in the pool of the top level, one inside the lift on the bottom level, and one outside the lift door on the bottom level), which act by regulating the flow of water in and out.

When at rest, the levers stay in the middle position and the water remains at its current level. Beside each lever is a stone dial that shows the current level of the water. The door at the lower level of the boatlift remains locked unless the water is at its level (Break DC 28). All three levers operate the same mechanism, and therefore move in unison. Once the mechanism has been activated, it takes 10 minutes for the water to rise or fall to its new position.

or swim up from below) finds themselves in an antichamber of Ibex's home plane. Tealpeck used to allow his prisoners to escape up through this boatlift, only to find themselves in the devil's clutches.

6A. Ibex's Antechamber (EL 6+)

This spherical chamber might be as much as a hundred feet wide, but its proportions constantly shift and blur. A dim bluish light fills the space, and the air is intensely hot and difficult to breathe. Floating about the room are dozens of glowing, gem-like objects, each roughly a foot in diameter. A dozen conical portals are spaced out along the walls of the room, the nearest of which crackles with blue flame.

Though the pool portal is always active, Ibex himself is seldom aware of it unless summoned to it by the appropriate infernal incantations. Each conical portal represents a passageway, either to some deeper chamber of Ibex's domain or to the homes of others who have signed contracts with

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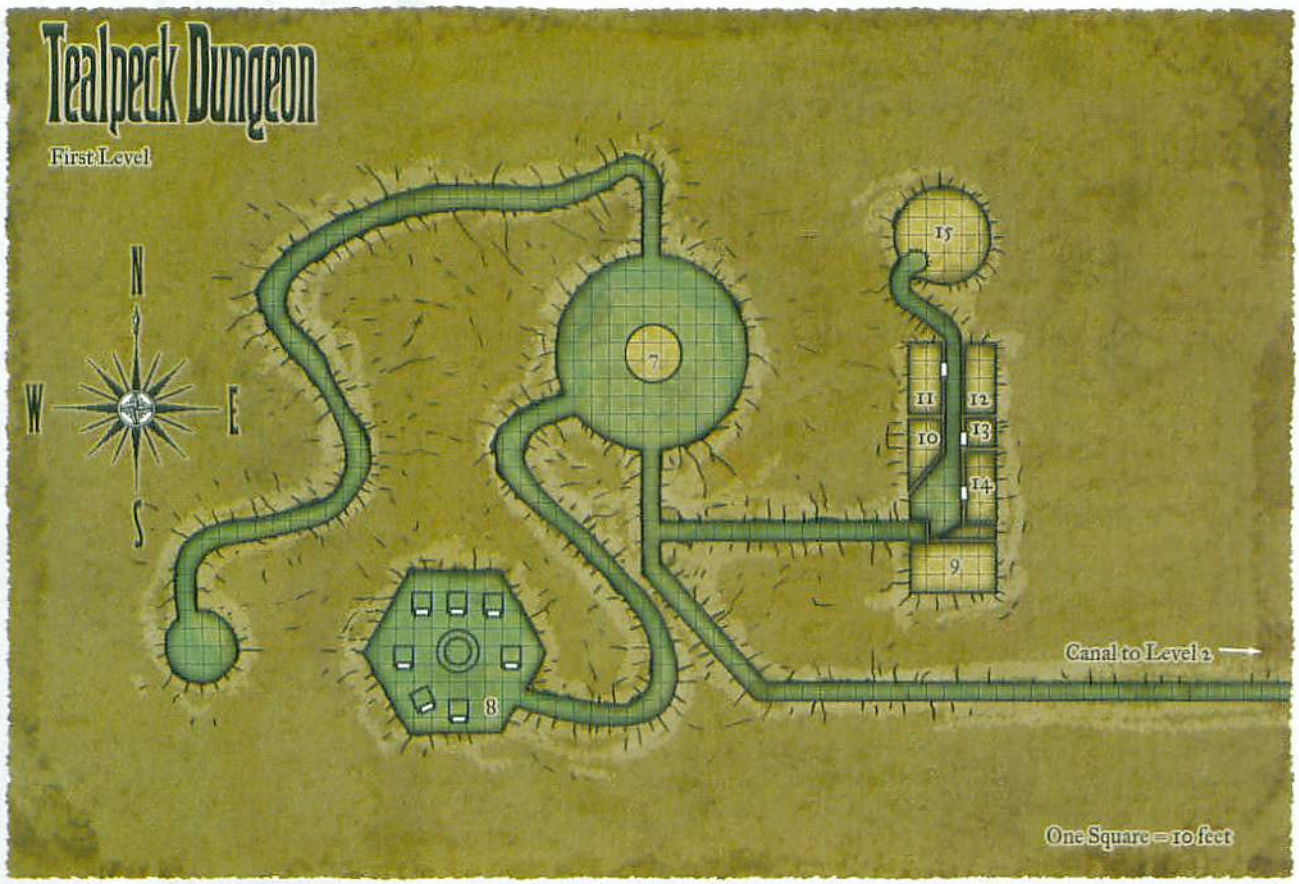

the devil. Only the portal to Tealpeck's temple is currently open (though another may become active as a segue to the next adventure in your campaign).

Leaving the chamber is a simple matter of stepping through the nearby flaming blue portal. Beings native to the Material Plane can pass through instantly and without harm, but the energies within the portal make passage difficult for mephits and other denizens of Ibex's domain. Such creatures must be hurled through by the devil himself, and many do not survive the journey. Ibex cannot pass through himself without sufficient power (for which he needs the *Principia Hextori*).

Creatures: Ibex's antechamber is patrolled by 1d4+1 vargouilles.

Vargouilles (1d4+1): hp 5; *Monster Manual* 254.

Tactics: The vargouilles begin combat by shrieking. Once the vargouilles begin shrieking, there's a 25% chance every three rounds that 1d4+1 more arrive to aid their kin. Additionally, once the vargouilles begin shrieking, there is a cumulative 1% chance every round that Ibex himself becomes aware of the intrusion. He moves slowly but deliberately through his domain, arriving in the antechamber from one of the larger portals in 2d6 rounds. Ibex has 200 hp and is otherwise a standard pit fiend (*Monster Manual* 57). Should he arrive, the PCs have one more round to flee while he laughs maniacally. He does not hesitate to include any remaining vargouilles in his first *fireball*.

Trap: The gem-like objects in the room are a by-product of the planar forces at work in the chamber. They are composed of pure energy and explode when touched.

Unstable Gem: CR 2; magic device; touch trigger; no reset; explosion (1d4+12 force damage; DC 25 Reflex save half); Search DC 27, Disable Device DC 27.

Chapter Two: Canals

7. Merrow Chamber (EL 7)

This water-filled circular chamber measures roughly one hundred feet across. Its most obvious feature is a central pillar, twenty feet thick, that extends fifty feet up to a domed ceiling. Twenty feet below the ceiling, the pillar supports a stone platform with low ramparts, over which can be heard a series of loud growls and grunts. A steady stream of water pours over this platform and down the pillar.

This area is a gateway to the rest of the dungeon. The central pillar contains a complex mechanical mechanism that opens the secret doors in the south and east walls. This mechanism is controlled by a six-inch-wide, star-shaped block of stone that is inserted into a corresponding niche in the base of the pillar. The stone block is currently in the possession of the merrow (aquatic ogres) that reside on the stone platform, but the mechanism can be bypassed with a DC 25 Disable Device check. If this check is failed by 5 or more it triggers the Trap below. Once the key has been inserted, one clockwise rotation of the niche opens the door in the west wall. A second rota-

tion closes the door in the west wall, and opens the door in the south wall. A third rotation closes both doors. If the niche is rotated counter-clockwise, it triggers the Trap.

The secret doors in the wall can be discovered with a DC 25 Search check, but any attempt to force them open (they can normally be opened only via the mechanism built into the central pillar) triggers the Trap.

Standard Doors: Stone; 4 inches thick; Hardness 8; 60 hp; break DC 28.

Creatures: The merrow reside mostly in lakes higher up on the mountain, but a passageway from those lakes to this chamber (through the central pillar) allows them to come and go. When the PCs arrive, four merrow stand guard here.

Merrow (4): hp 29 each; *Monster Manual* 199.

Tactics: The merrow never jump down into the chamber, but instead wait until intruders are brought up to them (see Trap below). Their platform is filled with water, which gives them good cover from area attacks such as *fireball*. As soon as the water level reaches the ramparts, the merrow dive in and swim back up again to capsize any boats. If they lose two or more of their number, the merrow attempt to retreat to the mountain lake above.

Trap: Failing to correctly operate the door mechanism causes the waterflow to increase rapidly, raising the water level at a rate of 5 feet per minute until it reaches the central rampart (where the merrow are waiting). Five minutes after it reaches the ramparts, the water level begins to drop at a rate of 5 feet per minute. Once the trap has been activated, the doors cannot be opened using the mechanism until the water level returns to normal.

Treasure: An opening in the central pillar at the rampart provides an exit to the mountain lake and contains a good portion of the merrow treasure (the rest is stored in the lake). The treasure here includes a *wand of hold person* (23 charges), a *potion of jump*, an *oil of magic weapon*, and 521 gp. There is also a star-shaped stone block—the key to operating the mechanism that opens the secret doors.

Development: If slain, the merrow guards are replaced within 24 hours. If a group of guards returns badly beaten, then no merrow return to the dungeon for several weeks.

The entire merrow clan numbers roughly 30–40, and can be found hundreds of feet up in their mountain lake (where the bulk of the clan's treasure is stored). The passageway to the lake is twisted, tight, and full of roots, rocks, and dead ends. Water flows through it slowly, as through a clogged pipe.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If 8 merrow are slain in the dungeon (2 groups of 4), and the PCs do not allow any of the guards to escape, then the merrow clan abandons their lake, moving hundreds of miles downriver in search of a less "risky" habitat. Give PCs an additional CR 6 experience award for stemming the rash of merrow assaults on riverboats.

8. Floating Prisons

Within this massive hexagonal chamber are a number of square cabins, supported on the bottom by wooden pontoons and anchored by iron chains to a series of tracks set into the ceiling. On each of the cabins is a stout oak door with wide iron finishings. A large central pillar, roughly twenty feet in diameter, holds a series of pulleys and levers, and is surrounded by a five-foot-wide ledge just above the water level.

These cabins once served as Tealpeck's prisons. He kept a wide assortment of creatures here, captured on his various expeditions and brought back to await sacrifice. The levers on the central pillar once controlled the position of the cells within the main chamber. They are broken now, and only cause the cells to shift a few inches when triggered.

Next to these levers is a secret door and yet another lever, hidden behind a loose rock. The door leads into the boatlift, connecting this area with the sacrificial temple (area 6). Tealpeck designed both the door and the hidden lever to be easily noticeable (Search DC 10).

At the height of his evil, Tealpeck used to trick his captives into attempting an escape through the boatlift. Riding up

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the lift in the middle of a ceremony, the prisoners would find themselves in Ibex's antechamber (area **6a**). PCs who use this method to exit the dungeon will also find themselves in Ibex's domain.

9. Storage Room

Crammed into this irregular chamber are a number of large statues and crates. The walls here are mortared stone, not carved like the rest of the dungeon.

This room holds statues and old furnishings that fell out of favor with the great wizard.

Treasure: Among the statues in the storage chamber are two five-foot-tall carvings of wyverns, one life-size likeness of a medusa looking at herself in a mirror, and three statues of Tealpeck. Two of these show the wizard holding a staff. The third does not, but in this one, the wizard's hand is positioned to look like it should. The missing staff is hidden among Spitwing's belongings in area **13**.

Development: When the PCs enter this wing of the dungeon, Spitwing is lurking in area **13**. Unless the PCs are unusually stealthy, he likely becomes aware of the intruders at this point. As soon as he does, he wriggles into the hole in that room, through his private lair, and then on to the second level of the dungeon before finally ending up in the library, where he waits for the intruders.

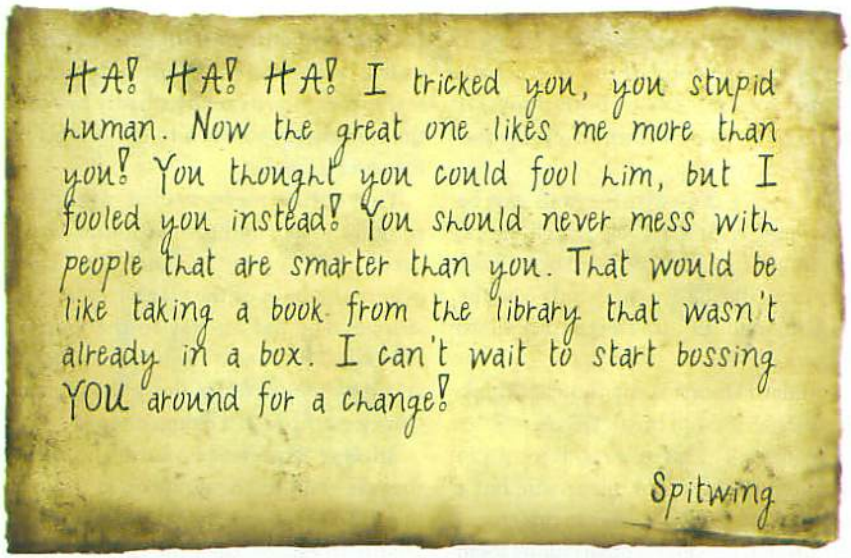
10. Sleeping Chamber

This room contains only a modest cot.

The strain of Tealpeck's experiments often left him weary and in need of a quick nap. This hideaway spared him the trouble of returning to his quarters in the main castle.

11. Tool Shed

This chamber is lined with racks and shelves, along which is arranged a collection of shears, rakes, spades, and sickles. A large stack of lumber and iron tools is piled in one corner.


HA! HA! HA! I tricked you, you stupid human. Now the great one likes me more than you! You thought you could fool him, but I fooled you instead! You should never mess with people that are smarter than you. That would be like taking a book from the library that wasn't already in a box. I can't wait to start bossing YOU around for a change!
Spitwing

The implements in this room were once used to cultivate the many species of plants and fungus in area **15**. There are also materials here that can be used to repair boats. A secret door at the back of this room leads to area **10**.

Treasure: The tools in this room include: 3 gold sickles (worth 300 gp each), 1 pair of silver pruning shears (worth 20 gp), 1 obsidian garden spade (worth 200 gp), 2 pairs of platinum scissors (worth 500 gp each), 10 ordinary shears (worth 2 sp each) and one cold iron knife with a diamond-studded handle (worth 1,000 gp).

12. Laboratory

Scattered around this room are several tables, a few large open crates, some boxes, and two chairs. Several lit torches gutter on each wall. In the center of the room, a large table is covered with several scraps of parchment, an unlit candle, and a bottle of green liquid. Against the far wall, a shorter table holds overturned glassware, from which a number of liquids seem to have recently spilled. A stench of sulphur wafts from that direction.

Here Tealpeck researched, tested, and perfected a number of elixirs, most of which were aimed at restoring beauty and youth. Once a well-organized workspace, this room has become a playpen for Spitwing, whose curiosity and feeble attempts at experimentation are responsible for the many broken vials and overturned crates.

Treasure: Strewn about the floor and inside crates is an impressive assortment of rare herbs worth a total of 250 gp. There are also 3 *potions of cure light*

Tealpeck's Illusion

Tealpeck spent months and a significant portion of his fortune crafting an illusion to fool Ibex. The result is a unique effect that he hoped would pass muster. Even with this powerful illusion, however, his lack of confidence in his own abilities eventually caused him to despair of ever breaking free of the fiendish pact.

The *Holy Path of Ethuknikar* appears to be the *Principia Hextori* in every way. In addition to fooling the mundane senses, the following traits of *a book of vile darkness* have been woven into the spell, suppressing the corresponding traits of *a book of exalted deeds*: The book radiates an aura of strong evocation [evil]. All LN, N, or CN characters that touch the book take 5d4 points of damage. All good characters that touch the book take 5d6 points of damage. This effect functions at CL 17.

The illusion ends at the cover, however. Anyone that actually reads the book can immediately tell that it is, in fact, *a book of exalted deeds*. Given the possible consequences of accidentally reading the wrong book, however, PCs will likely only read the book as a last resort.

wounds, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, and 1 *potion of neutralize poison*.

13. Spitwing's Lair

The floor here is meticulously tiled and covered with a random assortment of crates, barrels, tables, and weapons. Just at the edge of the canal is a large teak table, upon which rests a skeletal body of roughly human proportions. The body is dressed in fine gold, wears an obsidian crown, and has a staff laid across its chest.

Spitwing brought Tealpeck's bones here, after they were picked clean by pirhana, and laid them out in his robes upon this table.

Spitwing has made himself a lair here in a small hole dug out of the east wall and covered by an empty crate (Spot DC 25 or Search DC 20). The hole is 1 foot in diameter and leads to a burrow, roughly 5 feet by 10 feet and about four feet high. Another 1-foot-diameter tunnel leads from Spitwing's lair to area **16**.

Treasure: Spitwing's stash (located inside his hovel) contains 50 pp, 25 gp, and 6 diamonds worth 250 gp each. The crates in this room are watertight and intact, and contain a number of hides (6 owlbear hides worth 10 gp each and 4 sections of blue dragon hide worth 100 gp each). The barrels are also watertight, and contain an assortment of liquors and wines worth a total of 500 gp.

There are also several normal chests full of weapons, as follows: 6 matching silver-plated daggers worth 15 gp each, 2 longswords with small rubies in the hilts worth 100 gp each, and three bronze shields with engravings of tigers and leopards (worth 50 gp each for the artistry, but not much good for combat).

Finally, one of the crates contains an airtight lead box that holds the *Holy Path of Ethuknikar*, still disguised to look like the *Principia Hextori*. Also resting in the box is a note Spitwing penned to Tealpeck concerning his betrayal. He intended for Tealpeck to find it along with the real *Holy Path of Ethuknikar* after he had unknowingly sacrificed the *Principia Hextori*. Tealpeck never saw it, however, as he never opened the box (which he thought contained the *Principia Hextori*) before the imp killed him. The imp has since forgotten he ever wrote it.

The staff on Tealpeck's body is not magical, but has a curious brass fitting at its bottom that contains three small brass pegs. The staff is actually a key to operate the seal of Wee Jas in area **17**.

14. Liquid Room

The mortared walls of this room are bare, as is the floor.

Many of the stones that make up the walls of this room are hollow, and can be removed from the wall to reveal a variety of potions. Tealpeck stored his most common potions here to keep them on hand, yet out of the way. The PCs can turn up 1d4 of these hidden compartments with each successful DC 15 Search check.

Treasure: Five of the secret compartments are empty, and the remaining

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potions are divided among the other 15 stones, one potion per stone: 3 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, 5 *potions of cure light wounds*, 2 *potions of bull's strength*, 1 *potion of water breathing*, 1 *potion of water walk*, 1 *potion of fly*, 1 *potion of haste*, and 1 *potion of resist energy* (fire 10).

15. Plant Room (EL 8)

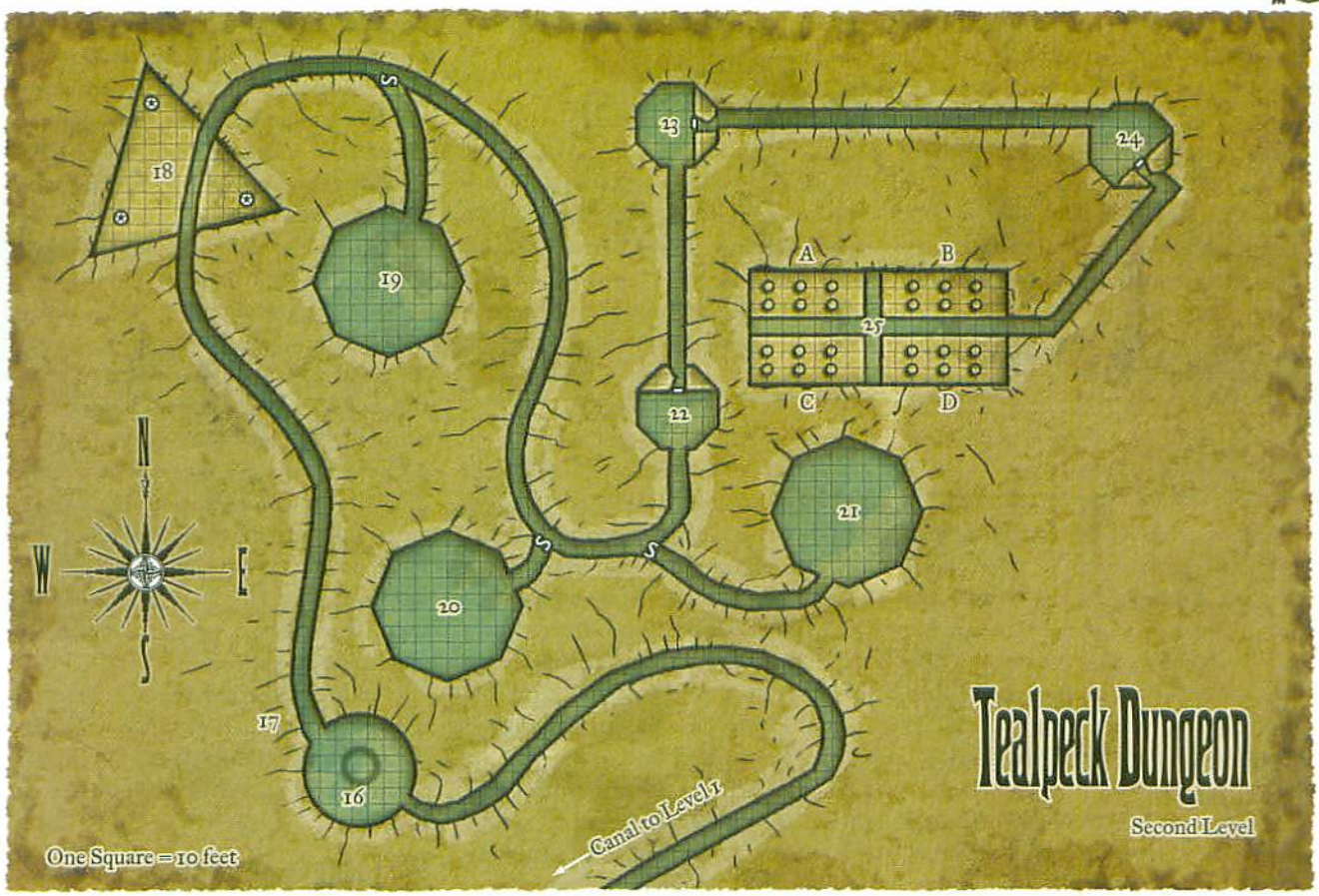
Three luminous globes set into the ceiling light this hot and steamy room. Fifteen feet from the entrance, the water meets a tile floor that extends to the perimeter of this great circular chamber. The walls and floor are covered with creeping vines and fungi, as are several large tables. Several large chests also peer out from among the thick vegetation. In the center of the room, a wide spiral staircase rises up to the ceiling, nearly forty feet high. Projecting from the staircase are four evenly spaced, circular platforms. Each of these appears to be roughly ten feet in diameter. The room's thick vegetation covers these platforms as well, and even spills out onto the staircase.

Many of Tealpeck's elixirs and potions came from the pollens, juices, and saps of this once-neat garden. The three globes, enchanted with permanent *daylight* spells, provide light for this vegetation.

Creature: All of the plants here are benign, with the exception of their caretaker, a shambling mound appointed by Tealpeck to guard this area. Shumack was created by an evil herbalist, Arachteus DeBelvigne, who imbued it with a druid's soul, granting it druidic powers, and giving it the ability to speak a with a liquid, mushy voice. When the unstable magic threatened to destroy DeBelvigne's creation he sent the shambling mound to his good friend Tealpeck, whose careful ministrations restored the creature's sanity (such as it was). DeBelvigne thanked the wizard by letting him keep the creature. Shumack's aid was crucial to Tealpeck, both in crafting potions and in developing the disguise for the *Holy Path of Ethuknikar*.

Since Tealpeck's death, the shambling mound has survived on nothing but fish and a few foolish scrags. Over the years Spitwing has made a sport of sneaking into the plant room, smashing containers and devouring the most delicate flowers, then streaking out before the shambling mound can react. The plant creature dreams of one day catching the imp, shackling him up, and making a servant of him (or devouring him, if he proves too unruly).

Shumack DeBelvigne **CR 8**
Male shambling mound druid 4
N Large plant
Monster Manual 222



Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +8, Spot +2
Language Common

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 20
hp 117 (12 HD)
Immune electricity, plant traits
Resist fire 10
Fort +15, **Ref** +4, **Will** +10

Spd 40 ft.
Melee 2 slams +16 (2d6+7)
Space 10 ft. **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +20
Atk Options constrict (2d6+7), improved grab
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 4)
2nd—*barkskin, spider climb, flaming sphere* (DC 14)
1st—*entangle* (DC 13), *faerie fire, longstrider, magic fang*
0—*detect magic* (2), *guidance, light, read magic*

Abilities Str 24, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 15, Cha 6
SQ resist nature's lure, trackless step, wild empathy +2, woodland stride
Feats Brew Potion, Eschew Materials, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Iron Will, Weapon Focus (slam)
Skills Hide +3 (+15 in this room), Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Survival +6

Slitherscale, Large viper animal companion: hp 13, *Monster Manual* 279.

Tactics: When he hears the PCs approach, Shumack attempts to blend in with the plants on the top platform. He believes the PCs may be able to help him capture Spitwing, so he refrains from immediately attacking. As they explore, Shumack reaches down from the platform and attempts to grab one of the PCs. If the grab is successful, he holds his captive over the ledge and shouts, "Shumack can help you, or Shumack can crush you, you decide!"

If Shumack is unsuccessful in initiating a parley, then he fights to the death.

Treasure: Though the shambler was initially happy to assist Tealpeck, he eventually began asking for a few coins or gems in return. Three chests in the room contain: 600 cp, 200 sp, and 150 gp. If Shumack is destroyed, a search of his body turns up a 5000 gp blue diamond containing the trapped soul of the druid **Gwyllyk Fhallyrwnthan** (*NG* male human druid 5).

Development: If the PCs can improve Shumack's initial attitude of unfriendly to friendly or better, he agrees to tell the PCs what he knows about the dungeon. Give the PCs a +10 bonus on their check if they agree to capture Spitwing and turn him over to Shumack. The shambler knows all about Tealpeck's plan, but he does not know that Spitwing tried to betray Tealpeck to Ibex. He also knows that Spitwing killed Tealpeck, but he does not know why.

If Gwyllyk Fhallyrwnthan is released by destroying the gem that contains his soul, he thanks the party, provides healing (he has 2 *cure light wounds spells* and one *cure moderate wounds* spell prepared) and relates what he recalls from his strange imprisonment. He remembers the shambler's hatred for Spitwing, and he believes the imp is still lurking about the dungeon, but he does not remember anything about

Tealpeck's plan or the two books. After he tells the party what he knows, he requests that they escort him from the dungeon as soon as possible. If they refuse, he relies on his vague memories to find his own way out.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs get information out of Shumack, give them experience as if they had defeated him in combat.

16. Entrance to the 2nd Level

This is a large, circular room with a ten-foot-wide central column.

Trap: A series of tripwires runs just below the surface of the water here, forming a rough square within the room. The wire is part of an aquatic trap. Tealpeck's boats are designed to catch the tripwires in this trap by simply passing over them; if the PCs disable the hooks when they first find the boats, the trap fails.

If there are PCs trapped in the pit after it resets, there are several ways they can escape. First, if any PCs manage to avoid falling in the first time, they can re-trigger the trapdoor after it resets. It's a DC 12 Climb check to clamber up the pit walls to escape.

If all the PCs are trapped and have no magical means of escape, they can, with persistence, break through the trapdoor. The trap door ceiling is roughly 2 feet thick, and is also lined with iron bars. The scrags and general decay have weakened the structure, and trapped PCs should be able to easily identify and smash out a weak section of stone. Once a hole is made, water immediately pours through (PCs notice the level rising at about 2 inches per minute). Climbing through the gushing water requires a DC 20 Climb check.

Scrag Pit Trap: CR 3; mechanical; submerged tripwire/boat-hook trigger; automatic reset in 5 minutes; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 25); wires hoist the boats into the air, spilling their occupants while the floor opens simultaneously, draining into area **16a** (a DC 25 Reflex save allows the victims to hold on to the boat as it is hoisted up) resulting in 3d6 falling damage; Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 35.

16a. Scrag Pit (EL 5)

The water from the circular room above drops roughly thirty feet down into a square chamber. A large pile of rocks juts out of the water here. The stone walls are lined with a grid of metal bars, but the stonework between the bars has been gouged out.

The water here is 10 feet deep.

Creatures: Tealpeck originally kept an aquatic umber hulk here (thus the metalwork and gouged stone) to greet any trap victims. He also maintained a small group of scrags who patrolled the halls of his dungeon. In the years since the wizard's death, the scrags grew careless, and one day tumbled into the pit. Though they managed to slay the umber hulk (pieces of its shell can still be found among the rocks), they never managed to escape the prison. Not suited to life in close quarters without food, the scrags eventually killed and ate each other. Now only one remains.

Scrag: hp 54; *Monster Manual* 247.

Treasure: Scattered among the rocks in this chamber are the belongings of previous trap victims, including 1 *potion of cure serious wounds*, 3 white pearls (100 gp each), 1 chrysoberyl (100 gp), 13 pp, and 45 gp.

17. The Seal of Wee Jas

The silty canal water instantly clears as it flows into this room. Three torches that burn underwater light this room from below. The submerged floor is inlaid with a colorful mosaic of Wee Jas's holy symbol. The water remains clear as it continues down a long corridor that eventually winds out of sight.

The torches are lit with *continual flame* spells. The mosaic floor here is actually the top of a massive stone cylinder that is part of the exit trap in the library (area **25**). When the trap is triggered, the cylinder rises to the ceiling, sealing off the dungeon beyond for three hours before resetting. The cylinder can also be raised intentionally by turning three locks on the seal (one hidden under each *continual flame*). When raised, the cylinder can be lowered by releasing another set of locks (there are two sets of release locks, one on each side of the raised peg). The key to all of the locks is affixed to the end of Tealpeck's staff, which lies in Spitwing's lair (area **13**). Without the staff, it's a DC 25 Open Lock check to pick the locks. To make matters more complicated, each lock is designed to slide deeper into the cylinder whenever any of the locks are disturbed. Thus if an Open Lock attempt is failed, all of the locks on the cylinder slide deeper by one inch, and the DC for unlocking them is increased by 4 (this occurs a maximum of six times).

After being lowered, the cylinder cannot be raised again for a full hour (while the mechanism resets itself).

Stone Peg: 10 feet thick; Hardness 8; 1,800 hp.

18. Library Entrance

The canal passes through a large, triangular room. Except for the canal, the floor is dry tile. A row of ten unlit lanterns hangs on the far wall beneath a colorful but faded inscription. At each corner of the room, a statue of a warrior in full plate stands with a stone sword poised over a stone book, as if either guarding the item or preparing to destroy it.

The lanterns are decoys and are trapped. The true "lanterns" are actually concealed in the statues. The handle of each statue's sword can be removed, and each emits a beam of light (one red, one blue, and one violet). The detachable nature of the sword handles can be determined with a DC 10 Search check.

Traps: Each lantern has a built-in *fire trap*, which is triggered after they have been burning for five minutes.

Lantern Fire Trap: CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, 12th-level wizard, 1d4+12 fire, DC 17 Reflex save half damage); search DC 29 Disable Device DC 29.

Treasure Hall

The winding corridor beyond this room contains three secret doors leading to Tealpeck's main treasure storage chambers (areas **19–21**). These doors are better concealed than most of the secret doors in this dungeon, and require a DC 30 Search check to discover.

19. Copper Room (EL 4)

Eight underwater torches light this octagonal room from below. Beneath the surface, the floor is coated with copper coins and an assortment of jewelry, bronze candelabras, and chests. Schools of small fish dart in and out of the torchlight, and the skeletons of other fish can be seen among the treasure. A circular opening is in the ceiling, less than four inches in diameter.

This chamber houses Tealpeck's minor treasures, which are protected only by a few feet of water and a small population of piranha. Water from the mountain lake is drawn in through the ceiling hole automatically for ten minutes each day (this serves to replenish the fish population). The floor is divided into eight wedge-shaped sections, with one torch set into each section. Each of the torch lights (*continual flames*) conceals a lock (Search DC 15) that can be used to raise that section of floor above the water. The locks can be opened with Tealpeck's staff, or picked with a DC 25 Open Lock check. Raised sections of floor remain up for one hour and then lower automatically. No more than two sections can be raised at a time. If a third is raised, the other two descend automatically.

Creatures: The piranha swarm that lives in this room is not part of the general population in the canals. If it is killed, it is replenished from the lake above over the course of the next 3 days.

Piranha Swarm: hp 47; see page 40.

Treasure: The following treasure has been scattered across the floor of this room: 30,000 cp, 3 brass candelabras, 3 silver necklaces worth 100 gp each, a partially rusted, silver-plated pendant of an eagle worth 20 gp, a platinum goblet worth 300 gp, an airtight chest containing 3 lead bars and a scroll of *lightning bolt*, a waterlogged chest containing 600 gp, and 4 pearls worth 100 gp each.

20. Silver Room (EL 7)

Eight underwater torches light this octagonal room from below. Beneath the surface, the floor is coated with silver coins, among which lies an assortment of small silver chests. A circular opening is in the ceiling, less than four inches in diameter.

Creature: This room holds treasures of moderate value, including the bulk of Tealpeck's silver. The floor here operates the same way as the floor in the copper room (area **19**). Similarly, the ceiling hole releases fresh water and fish from the mountain lake for ten minutes a day. However, in this room, the fish are rapidly devoured by a chuul that hides against the side wall.

Chuul: hp 59; *Monster Manual* 35.

Tactics: The chuul spends its days picking through the treasure and eating the fish that get washed into the room. As soon as the PCs open the door, the chuul lies against the wall and waits. It attacks the first PC to come within reach.

Treasure: There are 10,000 sp scattered across the floor in addition to eight small silver chests (each worth 100 gp) that contain a total of 900 gp, along with 3 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of levitation*, and 12 ornamental gold and silver rings worth 200 gp each.

21. Gold Room (EL 8)

Eight underwater torches light this octagonal room from below. Beneath the surface, the floor is coated with gold coins, among which lies a collection of heavy-looking gold chests. Scattered about the floor, and set into the sides of the chests, are numerous dark blue and green gemstones. A circular opening is in the ceiling, less than four inches in diameter.

Creatures: This room contains a large portion of Tealpeck's most valuable items. The floor here operates the same way as the floor in the copper room (area **19**). Similarly, the ceiling hole releases fresh water and fish from the mountain lake for ten minutes a day, but this room contains an additional guardian: a Huge water elemental.

In addition to the piranha swarms that populate the rest of the dungeon, one lives in this room. If it is killed, it is replenished from the lake above over the course of the next 3 days.

Piranha Swarm: hp 47; see page 40.

Huge Water Elemental: hp 152; *Monster Manual* 100.

Tactics: The water elemental in this room is unusually canny, and uses the piranha swarm to its advantage. It initiates combat by trying to capsize the PCs' boat, dumping as many of them as possible into the water, then creates a vortex, automatically picking up the piranha swarm. The elemental then tries to suck the PCs into the vortex, where they are subject to attacks from the piranha swarm as well as damage from the vortex itself.

Treasure: There are 4,000 gp strewn across the bottom of this room, along with 4 solid gold chests worth 1000 gp apiece. The chests contain 50 pp, 10 pieces of jet worth 250 gp each, 3 diamonds worth 250 gp each, 4 sapphires worth 500 gp each, 4 rubies worth 300 gp each, and 6 emeralds worth 150 gp each.

The blue and green stones set into the chests just glass, and are worth 1 sp each.

22. Red Room

The canal leads through a hexagonal room roughly fifty feet in diameter. At the far end of the room, a small platform juts out, partially obstructing the water flow. Upon the platform stands the stone figure of a woman who seems to be peering down the tunnel at the far side of the room with her arm extended. Her hand appears carved to grasp something, yet is empty.

The stone woman's hand is fitted to hold the red lantern from the library entrance (area **18**). If that light is placed in her hand, its beam shines down the corridor, bouncing off two tiny mirrors affixed to the wall.

Proceeding down the corridor, the PCs can notice that beneath each mirror is a triangular ceramic tile with a brass fitting, and three cryptic runes.

Placing the wrong light in the statue's hand causes the beam to bounce off two decoy mirrors, whose tiles contain decoy runes.

23. Blue Room

The canal leads through a hexagonal room roughly fifty feet in diameter. At the far end of the room, a small platform juts out, partially obstructing the water flow. Upon the platform stands the stone figure of a woman who seems to be peering down the tunnel at the far side of the room with her arm extended. Her hand appears carved to grasp something, yet is empty.

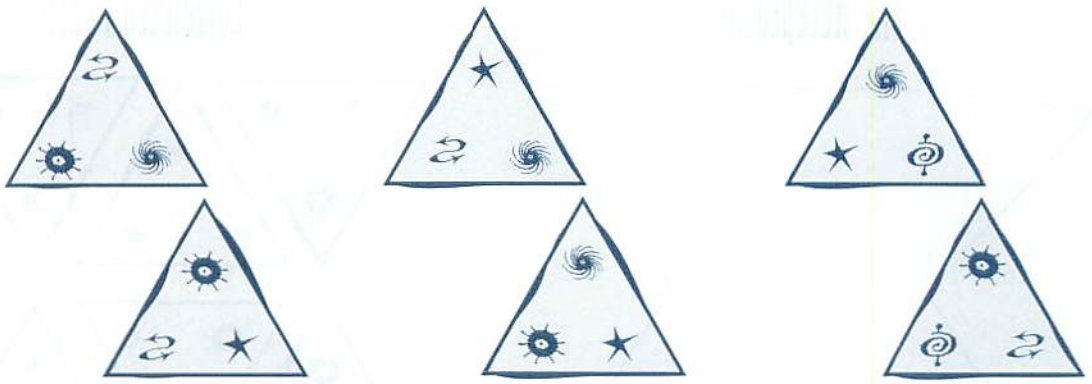
This room and the ensuing corridor are similar to the red room (area **22**), except that the statue's hand is fitted to hold the blue light found in the library entrance (area **18**). Again, if that light is placed in her hand, its beam shines down the corridor, bouncing off two tiny mirrors affixed to the wall. Once again, placing the wrong light in the statue's hand causes the beam to hit two decoy mirrors, whose tiles contain decoy runes.

24. Violet Room

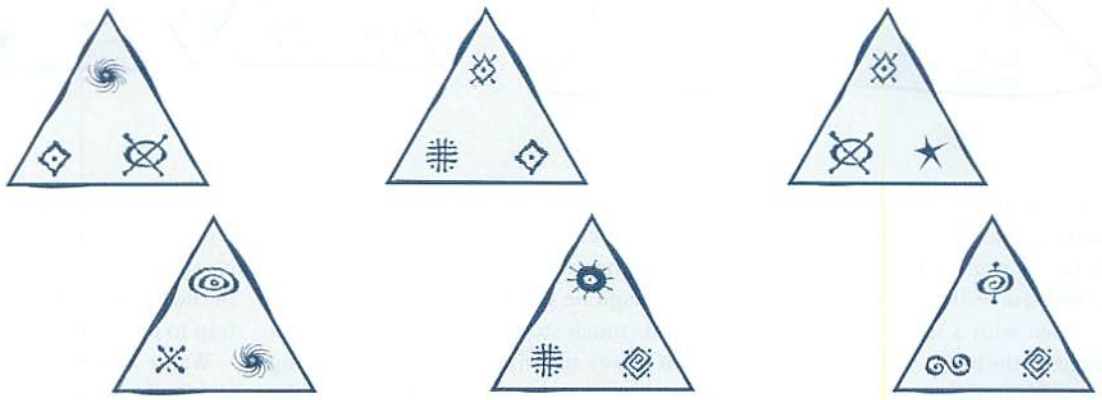
The canal leads through a hexagonal room roughly fifty feet in diameter. At the far end of the room, a small platform juts out, partially obstructing the water flow. Upon the platform stands the stone figure of a woman who seems to be peering down the tunnel at the far side of the room with her arm extended. Her hand appears carved to grasp something, yet is empty.

This room and the ensuing corridor are similar to the red room (area **22**), except that the statue's hand is fitted to hold the violet light found in the library entrance (area **18**). If that light is placed in her hand, its beam shines down the corridor, bouncing off two tiny mirrors affixed to the wall. Placing the wrong

Correct Runes



Decoy Runes



light in the statue's hand causes the beam to hit two decoy mirrors, whose tiles contain decoy runes.

25. Library (EL 7+)

The corridor leads through a circular opening into a massive rectangular room with a cylindrical ceiling. The canal continues all the way to the back of the room, with tiled platforms to either side. Halfway into the room, another canal runs perpendicular to the first, dividing the room into four platforms of equal size. Upon these platforms are several cases of empty shelves and cubbies, all in heavy disrepair. Each platform also supports two rows of thick stone pillars. Waterlogged books and ruined scrolls have been scattered haphazardly across the four platforms.

The platforms immediately visible are a ruse to distract intruders from the true library, which rests underneath the water. Shaped like a great cylinder, the entire chamber rests upon a network of huge wheels and pulleys housed within an even larger cylinder. PCs may figure this out by noticing some of the following clues:

- PCs may notice a gap in the stone all around the circular entrance to this room with a DC 15 Spot check. This gap is less than half an inch thick.
- PCs inspecting the decoy shelves may make a DC 15 Spot check to notice that they are poorly constructed, and have not been treated against the damp conditions of the dungeon.
- PCs searching in the water for anything unusual have a chance to spot strange imperfections in the submerged wall (Spot, DC 18). These imperfections are not stone, but are in fact thick gray curtains which hang down over the entrances to the true library.

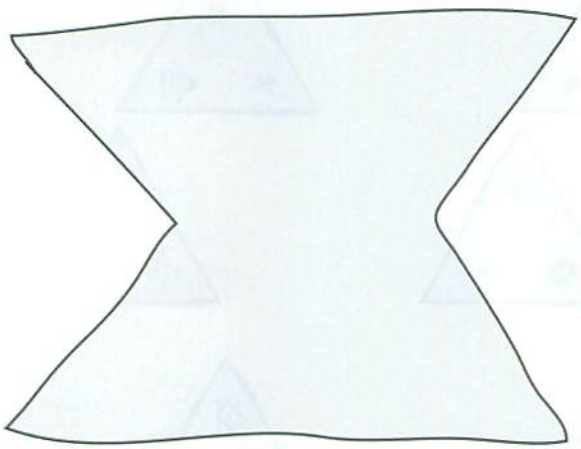
In the center canal on the north wall of the room is a slot for inserting the tiles collected in the preceding corridors. If the tiles are inserted with the correct orientation (so that all of the adjacent symbols match) then the room begins to rotate. Note that due to the position of the platforms, the only safe place to wait out the rotation is in the east-west canal. Once the mechanism is activated, the rotation starts after a 5 round delay. The entire process takes 20 rounds. Once the room is flipped, the original tile slots become submerged and a recessed lever (formerly hidden by a hanging strip of carpet) becomes apparent. Pulling this lever causes the room to return to its original position. All rotation of the room occurs in a clockwise direction relative to the entrance.

On their reverse side, the platforms are surrounded by stone walls that rise straight to the ceiling (or floor, depending on which way the room is oriented).

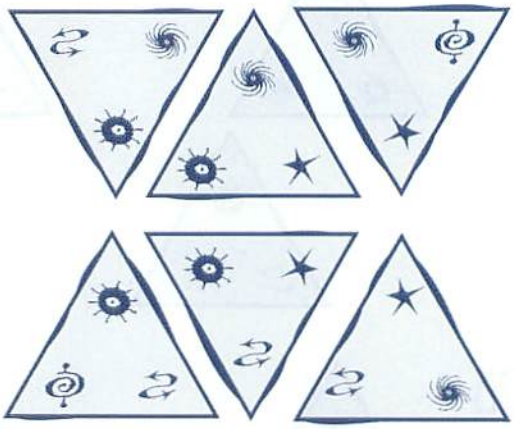
Four openings in the walls lead to the platforms themselves. Attached to the base of each opening is the thick gray carpet that would normally hang down over the entrances.

Inside each of these new chambers are two rows of pillars mirroring those seen on the flip side (in fact, the pillars go

Tile Receptacle



Completed Puzzle



straight through the platforms). Set into the inside walls of each of these chambers are twelve stone cubbies, some of which are sealed off with thick wood panels (each is coated with a thick grease and reinforced on the inside with iron slats). All of the cubbies are at least five feet apart. Each panel can be removed by twisting out four small pins, though doing so releases a *fire trap* (except for one cubby in chamber **A**, which contains all of the naga's treasure). The back of each cubby panel is covered with several layers of heavily oiled cloth and beeswax to prevent leakage. Most of the cubbies are open; their missing panels, along with a number of waterlogged books and scrolls (all unreadable) are strewn about the chamber.

The outside wall of chamber **A** is etched with an inscription (see the handout on the facing page).

Cubby doors: 1 in. thick, Hardness 8, hp 15, break DC 20.

Creatures: The library is guarded by a water naga, who by now should be accompanied by the imp Spitwing. Spawned from the lowest of hells, Spitwing has had an impressive career as servant to the great Nowell Tealpeck. Though he remained loyal to his master for many years, and admired the man's penchant for evil, greater things eventually called to him, and he went from being the wizard's right hand to being Ibex's errand boy.

Spitwing feels badly about the way things ended for Tealpeck, especially since he never really profited much by it. Though he still fears Ibex, he no longer puts much stock in the devil's promises of power and influence. Lately, Spitwing has become obsessed with running the dungeon, trying to gain mastery over the merrow and the shambler.

As far as the books and the sacrifice are concerned, Spitwing has lost interest. Not particularly bright, although Spitwing's recollection of events is sound, he can no longer clearly reason out which book is which. Being aware of the imp's mental limitations, Ibex has ordered him not to touch any books in the library.

Though he despises Shumack the shambler (area **15**), Spitwing has an uneasy truce with the library naga. He can assume the form of either a rat or a toad, and he uses the latter form to get around unnoticed. He excels at causing trouble, and ensures that the PCs see their share of it. Above all, however, Spitwing is a pragmatist, and if he learns that the PCs might be able to break Ibex's hold over the castle, he may be persuaded to make a deal with them (unless he thinks he can gain more by betraying them).

The imp's greatest advantage in the dungeon is his knowledge of it. Tealpeck often trusted him with maintaining the dungeon's internal mechanisms (pulleys, tripwires, counterbalances, etc.). He is especially likely to use that knowledge in the library, where he can use the exit trap to drown the PCs.

Water Naga: hp 70; *Monster Manual* 193. Replace the following spells known: *web* for *obscuring mist*, and *lightning bolt* for *protection from energy*.

Spitwing the Imp: hp 13; *Monster Manual* 56.

Tactics: When the PCs enter, the naga is hiding within chamber **A**. If the tiles are placed and the room begins rotating, the naga carefully slips out of the chamber and hides below the surface of the water, where it is difficult to detect. If the PCs enter one of the library chambers and leave the lever unguarded, the naga removes two of the key tiles and then swims to the PCs to attempt to trap them in the chamber using a *web* spell. Finally, it returns to the lever and pulls it, causing the room to flip over once more. If one or more PCs is left to watch the lever, the naga attempts to distract them by using a *suggestion* spell.

If his original tactic fails, the naga attempts to *lightning bolt* as many PCs as possible. It follows this by casting *invisibility* and seeking another vantage point. Finally, it uses its remaining spells to disable or confuse the fighters before focusing its bite and *magic missile* attacks on the party's spellcasters.

Assuming Spitwing is here by this point, he waits in hiding until there is a clear winner to the fight.

Trap: Each of the intact cubbies is protected by a *fire trap* spell. In addition, the box containing the *Principia Hextorii* (see below) also contains a *lightning bolt* trap that is activated by opening the box. Finally, the entire room is protected by a complex trap Tealpeck referred to as the exit trap.

On the ceiling just outside the library chamber is a permanent *magic mouth*. The mouth is set to activate if any books are removed from the chamber, if any books are placed in containers or robes which are then removed from the chamber, or if any part of the ceiling within a foot of the *magic mouth* is touched (the naga is unaware of this last condition). You should note that the *Principia Hextori* is already in a box. Thus, the whole box can be taken out of area **25** without triggering the *magic mouth* (but the book cannot be carried out once it has been removed from its box).

Though the *magic mouth* itself is innocuous, the patch of stone upon which it is cast contains a tripwire that sets off the following events. First, the seal of Wee Jas in area **17** closes in two rounds. If it is already shut, it does not lower again for three hours. Second, the library chamber rotates to its decoy position. Finally, hundreds of tiny channels open up along the floor of the hallway between area **18** and area **25**. These are fed by the mountain lake. The water between the library and the seal of Wee Jas (areas **17** to **25**) rises at a rate of 1 foot every ten minutes. Since the ceiling is 12 feet high, and the water is already 4 feet deep, then that zone fills up completely in less than an hour and a half. The situation reverses itself three hours after it starts, at which point the water descends at a rate of 4 feet every hour.

***Fire Trapped* Cubbies:** CR 5; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, 12th-level wizard, 1d4+12 fire, DC 17 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

***Lightning Bolt* Trap:** CR 7; magic device; touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 10th-level wizard, 10d6 electricity, DC 17 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Exit Trap: CR 6; magical and mechanical; visual trigger (*true seeing*); automatic reset; effects (see above); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

Treasure: Spitwing and the naga have pilfered the contents of most of the cubbies. Over the years, the naga has carted valuable potions and scrolls (in cases) through hidden canals down to the river, and up to major towns where it has been able to polymorph itself and sell off the goods for gems. Since books have never traveled well this way, the naga has left many priceless tomes on the floor to rot. The contents of the intact cubbies are listed by chamber and cubby number as follows:

Chamber A:

1: Four scrolls of *protection from chaos* in wax-sealed containers.

2: Five spellbooks of very different styles and shapes. Each contains spells of levels one through three (1d4 of each level). These once belonged to five young wizards with ambitious plans and no common sense.

3: Naga treasure: *potion of cure light wounds*, 3 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of water breathing*, *potion of barkskin*, 2 diamonds worth 500 gp each, 1 diamond worth 800 gp; a canvas sack containing 270 gp.

Chamber B:

1: *Boccob's Blessed Book*

2: *Wand of magic missile* (CL 5th, 12 charges)

3: Seven scrolls in wax-sealed bone scroll cases (*dimensional anchor, dispel magic, displacement, Evard's black tentacles, fireball, slow, water walk*)

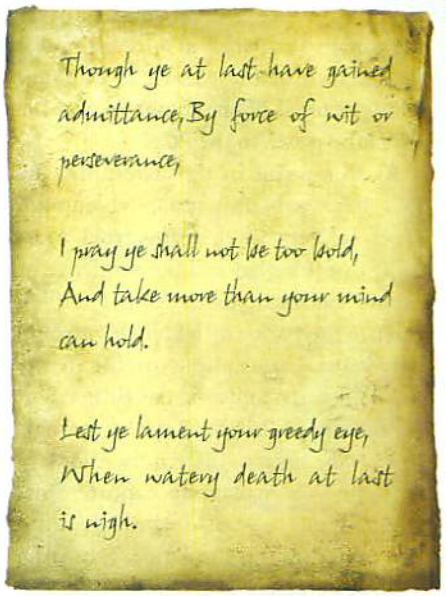
4: Fifteen volumes of Tealpeck's notes on using herbs to restore beauty.

Chamber C:

1: Two *potions of bull's strength*, two *potions of cat's grace*, two *potions of eagle's splendor*

Chamber D:

1: Six tomes containing horrendous poetry and three short romantic novellas involving a lusty young she-dwarf named Leela (these all appear to be written by Tealpeck).


Though ye at last have gained admittance, By force of wit or perseverance,
I pray ye shall not be too bold, And take more than your mind can hold.
Lest ye lament your greedy eye, When watery death at last is nigh.

2: A treatise on painting written by a well-known artist and dedicated to Tealpeck; 15 large scroll cases wrapped in a leather bundle containing 15 highly amateurish paintings; a leather satchel containing twelve vials of oil paint in multiple colors, as well as a set of six brushes

3: Five thick ledgers detailing Tealpeck's dealings with state officials, both local and distant. Most of these involve monetary payments for unspecified service, though many entries describe unpaid promises of land, weapons, soldiers, daughters, and culinary delicacies.

4: The *Principia Hextori*, sealed in a finely crafted, waxed gold box. The box is magically trapped (see above).

Development: When the naga engages the PCs, Spitwing provides no assistance, hoping that the creature perishes and leaves its treasure for the taking. Once the naga is defeated, the imp hovers invisibly near the exit and watches the PCs for a few minutes before addressing them. When he speaks, he delivers a sentence or two and then moves to avoid area of effect spells.

Spitwing's immediate goal is to secure the naga's treasure for himself. If he sees the PCs with the box containing the *Principia Hextori*, he recalls that this is the book his master was supposed to bring to Ibex. He gets very excited by this, and demands that the PCs leave the book and never return. He is proud of

his role in Tealpeck's demise, using his destruction of the wizard as evidence of his control of the dungeon and the threat he poses to the PCs.

By this point in the adventure, the PCs have probably amassed enough clues to help them reconstruct most of Tealpeck's plan and the sequence of events leading up to his death. Here you can use the parley with Spitwing to help correct misconceptions or fill in the missing parts. Spitwing has little talent for deception (Bluff +2), and so even his lies can be used to inform the PCs.

If the PCs manage to capture Spitwing, he can be easily intimidated into giving accurate information regarding Tealpeck's plan and demise. If the PCs threaten to deliver him to Shumack they gain a +6 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks. His account is disjointed and fearful, but with persistence, the PCs should be able to piece together what happened.

If negotiations break down, or the imp is attacked, he triggers the exit trap. It takes him three rounds to get from the library into the mechanical network and up to the trap trigger. Once triggered, he returns to the library and resumes negotiations, again demanding the naga's treasure and the *Principia Hextori*.

Concluding the Adventure

Darin Tealpeck listens to the PCs' stories from the dungeon and hears their opinions as to which book he should sacrifice. If presented with a choice, he opts to attempt to deceive the devil and sacrifices the *Holy Path of Ethuknikar*, hoping that his uncle's plan works.

If Darin never learns the true nature of the books and is given the *Principia Hextori* to sacrifice, then he does so. He feels relieved from his debt to Ibex, but this is only temporary, as the axe remains unforged (and thus unsacrificed). He nonetheless thanks the PCs, pays them 2,000 gp each in either platinum or gems (their preference). Three days after he is given the *Principia Hextori*, Ibex emerges triumphantly into the Material Plane. What he does at this point is beyond the scope of this adventure, but presumably he has major plans for the village of Og'Vihalla and the rest of the world.

If Darin sacrifices the *Holy Path of Ethuknikar*, then there is a tremor throughout the castle that lasts only a few minutes. Darin feels great relief, and thanks the PCs profusely. He asks them for details about their adventures, and gives them each 3,000 gp in platinum or gems. He also allows them to keep everything they found in the dungeon, except for the *Principia Hextori*. If the PCs insist on taking the book anyway, he doesn't try to stop them, but he does inform his church of the situation, and they may decide to take action against the PCs.

Peter Vinogradov lives in New York's Hudson Valley, where he teaches foreign languages. His first adventure, "Armistice," appeared in DUNGEON *#84.*

Scaling the Adventure

"Tealpeck's Flood" is designed for a group of four 6th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 4th–5th-level characters or 7th–8th-level characters. Simply adjust the NPCs' character levels up or down for each level your party's average deviates from 4. Specific changes to the adventure include:

4th–5th-level parties: Remove a steam mephit from area **4** and area **5**. Remove a merrow from area **7**. Remove the piranha swarm from area **21**. Reduce all the Open Lock, Search, Disable Device, and save DCs for all the traps by 2.

7th–8th-level parties: Double the number of mephitis in areas **4** and **5**. Add a merrow barbarian (*Monster Manual* 199) to area **7**. Double the number of piranha in the dungeon, so that 2 swarms show up whenever they are encountered. Advance the chuul in area **20** to 18 HD (making it Huge), and add a second Huge water elemental to area **21**. Give the water naga in area **25** 2–3 levels of sorcerer. Increase all the Open Lock, Search, Disable Device, and save DCs for all the traps by 2.

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19
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HEY GAMERS! WELCOME TO MY PLAY-BY-MAIL FACTORY. YOU'VE ALL BEEN CHOSEN FOR MY SPECIAL TOUR. BUT LET'S HEAR ABOUT YOU GUYS FIRST...
I'M SKIP. I ONLY PLAY VIDEO GAMES.
YEH...
UHH...
I'M REGINALD A CHESSMASTER.
I LIKE LOTS OF ACTION.
I LIKE STRATEGY & PLANNING.
HEY - I'M ASHLEY. I LIKE BIG ONLINE MULTI-PLAYER GAMES.
SO WHAT ARE YOUR GAMES LIKE?
I CAST WILD LOVE MONKEY ON YOU ASHLEY, BETTER ROLL YOUR SAVINGS THROW VS TODD BABY!
COME ON IN... WE HAVE SOMETHING FOR ALL OF YOU AT THE PBM FACTORY. ACTION, STRATEGY, MEETING OTHER PLAYERS. IT'S ALL HERE.
UGH. I NEED A SAVINGS THROW VS VOMIT.
HEH
THERE ARE OTHER PLAY-BY-MAIL COMPANIES? *
THIS IS THE SORTING ROOM. ALL THE PBM TURNS COME HERE.
WOW!
WE'RE THE ONLY PLAY-BY-MAIL COMPANY THAT SORTS OUR MAIL WITH A WATERFALL.
TONS OF GAMERS JUST LIKE YOU ARE INTO PLAY-BY-MAIL GAMES LIKE THE ONES BELOW...
OH YEAH - DID I MENTION THAT SOME HORRIBLE THINGS HAPPEN NEXT EPISODE?
* EDITOR'S NOTE: YES! BUT THEY DON'T HAVE A WATERFALL.

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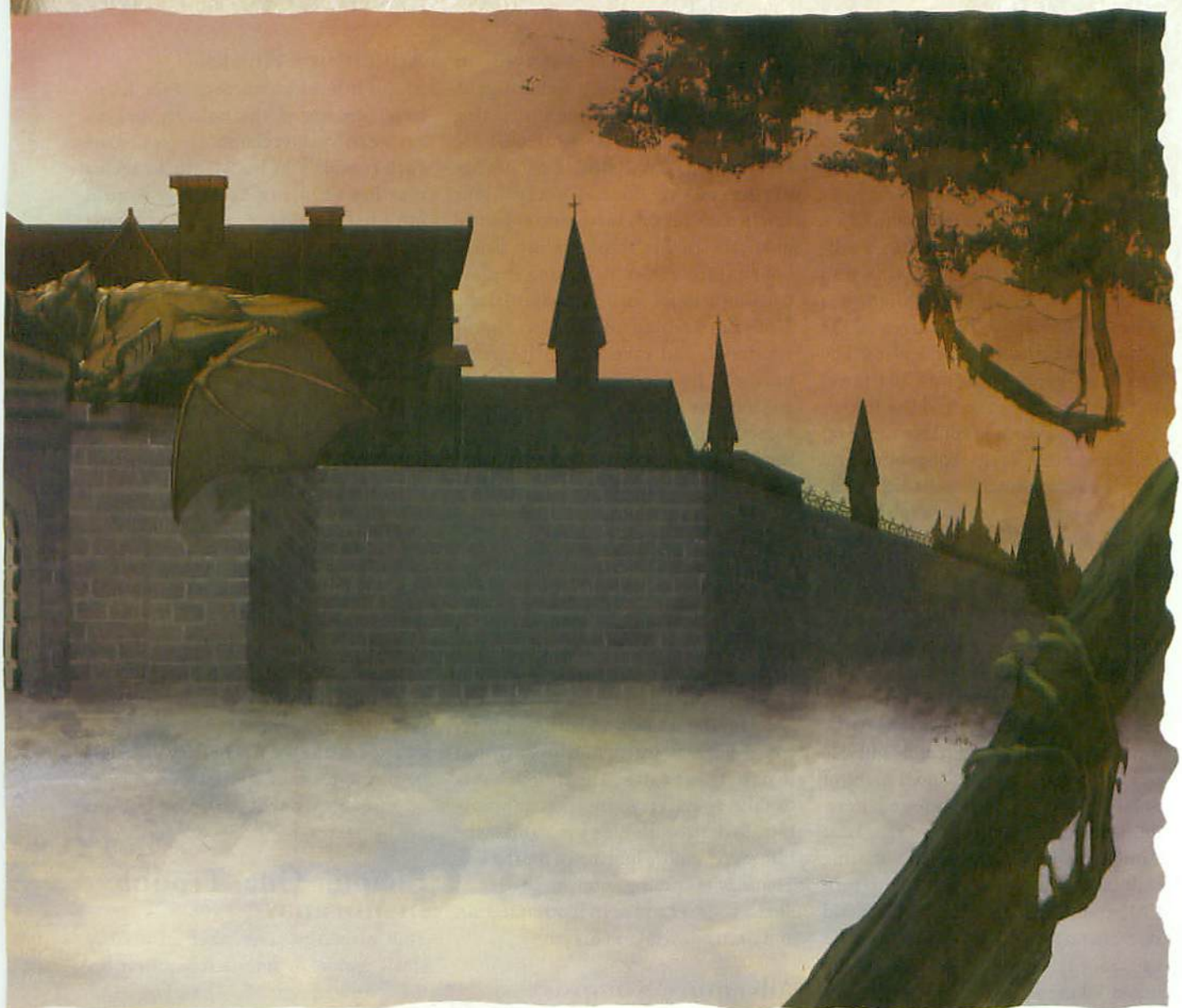
Man Forever

BY JASON NELSON-BROWN

BY UDON WITH SCOTT HEPBURN, DAX GORDINE AND CHRISTINE CHOI

BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

FORGOTTEN REALMS, HIGH-LEVEL (13TH–20TH), URBAN



A private man, Lord Samulbrar rarely appears in public, and his appearances have grown even more sporadic over the last few years. He arbitrates between tenants as necessary and holds a public ball once a year on Midsummer's night. He has never taken a wife or sired an heir, though he is known to entertain female visitors on occasion. He also keeps the company of a young man named Danik Grycos, an orphan he brought back as a teenager from a trip to Rashemen. If not precisely warm and lovable, Lord Samulbrar is certainly no worse than any other petty lordling. Or so it seemed, until his once-loyal subjects began to show up dead.

"Man Forever" is a D&D adventure designed for a party of four 15th-level characters. The adventure is set in the nation of Impiltur in the FORGOTTEN REALMS.

Adventure Background

The quiet county of Agmoth is nestled at the edge of the foothills of the Earthfast Mountains in southwestern Impiltur, where it would be of no particular interest or import, save for the unusual nature of its major landowner. Lord Samulbrar Chaseris has owned the majority of the land in this small fiefdom for as long as anyone can remember. He pays his taxes on time and treats his tenants with reasonable equanimity. His position would be indistinguishable from any other landowner but for one small fact—he has not aged a day (so far as anyone can tell) since he took lordship of the manor decades ago. His unending vigor and health earned him the nickname "Man Forever."

Over the last year, strange disappearances in Agmoth have grown in number, and some claim that these disappearances and Lord Samulbrar's strange longevity all point to one thing—Lord Samulbrar is a vampire! The whispering campaign against him has the potential to erupt into open revolt in the region as frightened tenant farmers grow bolder, and this unrest now threatens the regular shipments of gold and silver ore mined

in the Earthfasts en route to the royal mint in Hlammach. The twelve Lords of Imphras II have turned to Royal Herald Rune Tabard (Gabra Robardon) to recruit some skilled adventurers to take care of the problem, one way or the other.

Lord Samulbrar is not actually a vampire. He is little more than a self-absorbed retired adventurer who won the favor of the spirit-guardian of a grove of enchanted silver trees in the Gray Forest who were once elves. The elves had become one with the forest to escape their enemies and live forever in peace, and when Samulbrar drove off the rampaging Trklja hobgoblins and their Lashmistress Durvasala, the spirit-guardian bound Samulbrar's spirit to the grove, a pact symbolized by a glowing box of crystal called the *Arywen Cube*. As long as the trees endured, Samulbrar would remain young and strong, experiencing life as the elves see it, season upon season in endless refrain.

Ever the practical man, Lord Samulbrar realized that risking his life in battle would dishonor this incredible gift. He retired with his fortune and a grant of nobility to enjoy his newfound near-immortality. Content for a time, Lord Samulbrar soon found this routine stale and boring. He longed to return to the adventuring lifestyle but could not abandon his responsibilities to the county and nation. Instead, he began taking short and secret leaves of absence, leaving his royal butler Falder to administer his holdings. As years passed and Falder became increasingly elderly and frail, Lord Samulbrar realized he needed a new protégé.

His last adventure brought him and his companions to Rashemen, where he uncovered and destroyed a cadre of Durthan (evil witches of Rashemen devoted to Shar). In the process, he rescued young Danik Grycos, a promising youth recently orphaned by the Durthans. Samulbrar took Danik home, along with one last haul of loot (including the famous sword *Nightwatcher*).

On his return to Moranay, he revised his heraldic device to incorporate his final triumph with the symbol of a two-headed black bat (the mark of the Durthan circle he had destroyed), its wings outstretched on a field of gold. He spent most of his time instructing young Danik, and all went well for several years until stories of strange deaths among his old companions reached his ears. As these stories gained purchase in his thoughts, he began seeing threats in every lurking shadow, trusting no one but Falder and Danik. He began keeping his windows tightly shuttered, and even got rid of every mirror in his home after he developed an irrational certainty that someone (or something) was watching him through their reflective surfaces. He now stays inside all the time because he is afraid someone is after him.

He's right.

The church of Shar wants revenge. They have already taken care of his former allies and friends in subtle ways, but they still seek the sword *Nightwatcher*, the destruction of the last of the Grycos family that opposed them, and Samulbrar's pain and torment. They could have attacked him openly, but that isn't Shar's style. The church wants to take away everything that supports him, to destroy his life's work and make him suffer before moving in for the kill. That day is coming soon, as a covey of Shar's hags set a plan in motion to ruin and destroy the Man Forever.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs travel to the town of Moranay to investigate stories of civil unrest, only to find the townsfolk on the verge of rioting. Rumors that the wealthiest landowner in town has become a vampire have done their work, but as the PCs investigate, they learn that there may be something more to these slanderous whispers. Clues point to the ruined estate of a previous landowner, where the PCs discover the true architects behind the troubles in Moranay, a covey of Shar-worshiping hags bent on ruining the life of Moranay's leader. The PCs must defeat the hags and their minions before their magic and poisonious whispers can incite the town into a raging mob bent on burning Samulbrar's manor to the ground.

Adventure Hooks

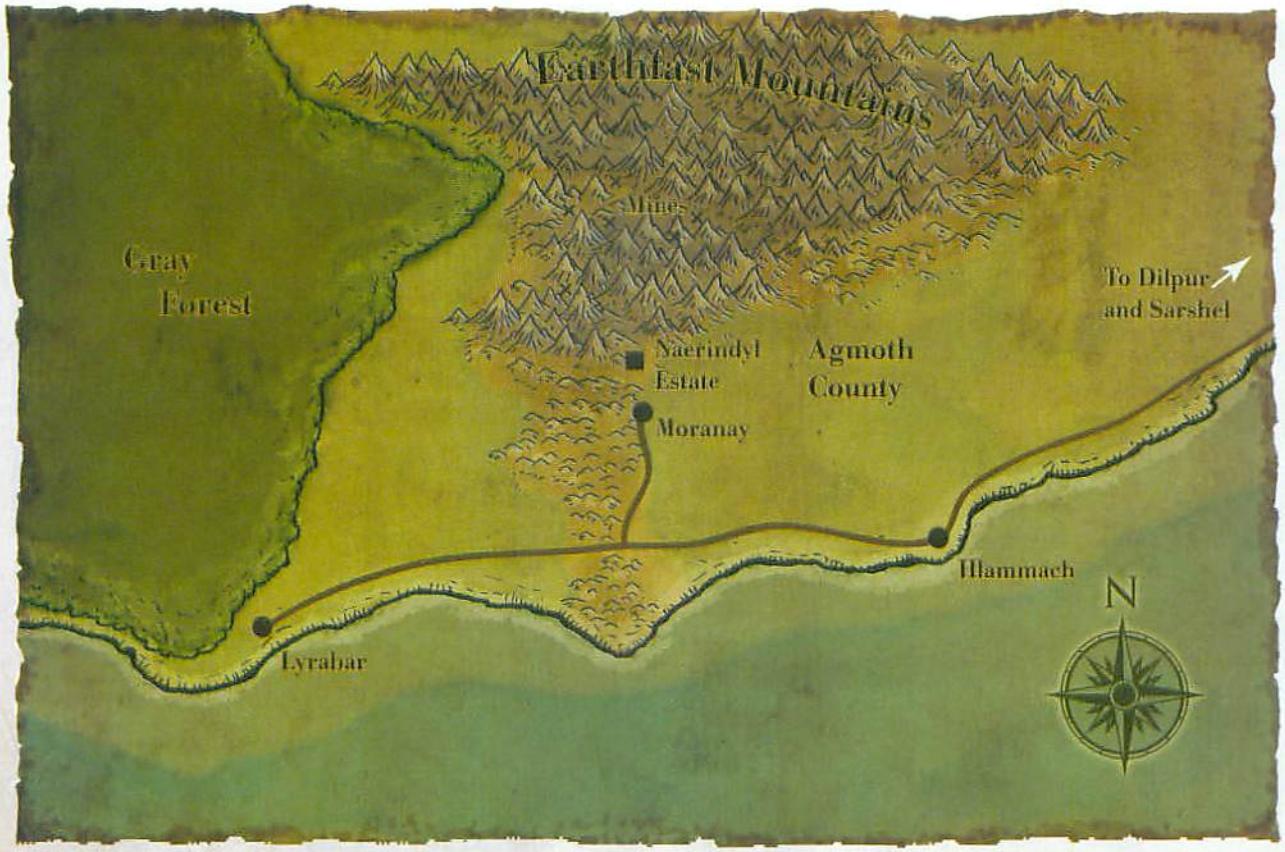
As high-level characters, PCs likely have contacts in the nobility, gentry, or wealthy merchant classes. One such contact asks his PC ally to seek a meeting with Lord Samulbrar to find out what is going on with the citizens of his county. The royal heralds feel that sending an official inquiry might cause the situation to explode, so the PCs are to be sent as discreet envoys empowered to take action if necessary to resolve the situation. If they discover the rumors of Lord Samulbrar's vampirism are true, they want the undead menace put down as quickly and quietly as possible.

Even if PCs have no personal contacts with upper-class NPCs, they have doubtless amassed a certain degree of fame—enough that Rune Tabard would contact them based on their reputation. If the PCs are not inclined to carry out the mission to Moranay simply as a favor to the crown, the Commissioner is willing to negotiate an appropriate award for the PCs. This reward may be in the form of special royal favors or valuables worth up to 10,000 gp per character.

Chapter One: Trouble in Moranay

This adventure takes place in a fairly small region in southern Impiltur, in the county of Agmoth. The county seat of Agmoth, Moranay, sits at the head of the Agmoth Road. Impiltur is a land of seafarers, so road traffic is not so heavy as in other kingdoms, but Moranay serves as an important trail-head for ores and metals from the hinterlands being shipped to the cities. If your PCs wish to explore elsewhere in the region, check out issue #346 of DRAGON, which features an article on this insular nation.

The party is given directions for travel from Hlammach or Lyrabar to the County of Agmoth via the Queen's Road. From either city, it is approximately 30 miles to a toll-station and royal hostel at the halfway point between the cities. The Agmoth Road leads some 17 miles north from this hostel to the small town of Moranay. For flying travel, total



distance from either city to Moranay is approximately 35 miles.

Moranay

Upon arriving in town, the PCs find the townsfolk to be unfriendly. The hags of Shar have been hard at work, using their insidious magic and silver tongues to corrupt the memories and opinions of the locals. If the PCs openly voice support for Lord Samulbrar, the reaction of the townsfolk becomes hostile. If questioned, the average townsfolk "remembers" all manner of atrocities or misdeeds perpetrated upon the people of Moranay, including excessive taxes, public torture of innocents, and worse. These memories have been artificially implanted via numerous *modify memory* spells and vicious rumormongering. If the PCs confront the townsfolk about these outlandish stories by asking for proof or providing contradictory testimony from other locals, the townsfolk simply observe that the PCs are strangers—reason enough not to trust them.

Moranay (Small Town): Conventional; AL LN; population 1,356; 800 gp limit; Assets 108,480; Isolated (90% human, 3% half-elf, 3% dwarf, 1% gnome, 1% halfling, 1% half-orc, 1% other).

Authority Figures: **Lord Samulbrar Chaseris** (LN male human monk 4/ranger 8/rogue 4).

Important Characters: **Danik Grycos**, Lord Samulbrar's ward and protégé (LN male human rogue 1/monk 10); **Falder**, Lord Samulbrar's butler (LN male human expert 5); **Niatha and Giandra Sachin**, serving girls at The Riddle of the Chase (CN female human commoner 3); **Olthas Balgerath**, brewmaster and owner of The Riddle of the Chase (LG male human expert 8); **Teda Hervyn**, Royal Constable (LG female human warrior 5).

The Hags: **Stavrala Nazaerlyth**, the leader (NE female shrieking hag cleric 6/nightcloak 8 [Shar]); **Tamilla Murck**, the killer (NE female annis hag rogue 2/assassin 8); **Vasyl Yauhenni**, the whisperer (NE female greenhag bard 8/shadow adept 4); **Turova, Vadim, and Mindaugus**, the captains (NE hagspawn rogue 5/fighter 4/barbarian 2).

Talking to the Locals

The PCs find an unfriendly reception when they begin investigating the situation in Moranay. Gather Information checks are impossible without first succeeding with a Diplomacy check to make the locals at least friendly.

A PC can instead substitute a DC 15 Intimidate check to compel townsfolk to talk, but word gets around quickly about such tactics. Each Intimidate check (successful or not) raises the DC for all future Bluff, Diplomacy, and Gather Information checks made in town by that character by 2.

Gather information checks made in public venues where others can overhear are made at a –10 penalty, since many townsfolk fear that Lord Samulbrar has spies in town.

Of course, a successful *charm person* or similar spell can quickly make someone compliant and talkative, but if the PCs do so in a public place, they'll likely spark a riot of angry commoners and force a sudden endgame (see "The Torch-Wielding Mob").

Each Gather Information check made in town takes 1d4 hours; the result of this check provides the following information—unfortunately, all of

this information is false, the result of memories modified by the Sharran cultists operating secretly in town.

Gather Information check	Result
DC 15	Lord Samulbrar framed the old priest and assayer, Vyrn Monku, for falsifying weights and embezzling and used his influence to bring Gracelyn in to replace him.
DC 20	Lord Samulbrar is actually the vampire minion of Danik Grycos, who came here to find new prey.
DC 25	Gracelyn, the royal assayer and priestess of Waukeen, is secretly a witch and is either controlling or is controlled by the vampires.

Magical Investigation

As noted, many NPCs in Moranay have been mentally influenced. The most common spell used by the hags is *modify memory*; implanted memories are permanent enchantments and can be detected by magic (but cannot be detected by Sense Motive checks, since the victims honestly believe their memories). These effects have all been powered by the Shadow Weave, and are thus difficult to notice (DC 27 caster level check) with *detect magic* and similar spells cast by Weave users (any character who does not possess the Shadow Weave Magic feat is a Weave user). Only one check is allowed per casting of a detection or divination spell, regardless of how many creatures within the area of effect may have enchantments in effect. If discovered, these *modify memory* effects can be dispelled only with great difficulty (DC 31 caster level check).

In addition, several NPCs (Niatha and Giandra Sachin at the Riddle of the Chase and Falder at Lord Samulbrar's mansion) have been charmed, and Teda Hervyn (the royal constable) has been dominated.

Uncovering the presence of the hags with divination magic is difficult, as the three masterminds are continuously protected by *mind blank* spells. In addition, Vasyl and Stavrala use the Shadow Weave, making detection of their spells (except evocations and transmutations) more difficult. A caster level check (DC 11 + the hag's caster level) is required for success, and only one check is allowed per divination spell, no matter how many Shadow Weave spells are in effect in the area. Dispelling their enchantments is also more difficult, with a DC of 15 + caster level. Spells such as *break enchantment* require no such checks. Though their hagspawn and werebat minions lack *mind blank*, they almost always travel magically disguised (usually with *veil*) when in company with the hags, and

their illusory disguises are difficult to penetrate, as noted above.

Physical Investigations

If a PC spends an hour wandering the streets of Moranay using detection spells, *true seeing*, or other means of investigation, there's a 10% chance per hour of encountering a disguised hagspawn berserker carrying a message to or from the hags' minions in Moranay.

There's also a cumulative 5% chance per hour of encountering one of the hagspawn captains who are aiding in the rumor-spreading campaign. The hagspawn captains use *rings of chameleon power* to appear as male human commoners. PCs engaged in an active search for people in disguise may note them with a DC 28 Spot check (DC 18 if the observer has *true seeing* or can otherwise see through illusions).

There is a 5% chance per hour of encountering one of the hag leaders as well (roll 1d6 if one is encountered, with a 1 indicating Stavrala, a 2 Tamilla, and a 3–6 Vasyl) in disguise in the town. Spot checks to detect their disguises are DC 32 for Tamilla, DC 35 for Stavrala, DC 42 for Vasyl. Increase the DC to see through their disguises by 2 (synergy with Bluff) if the hag knows she is being observed and acts in character. Reduce the DC by 10 if the observer has *true seeing* or can otherwise see through illusions. The hags are in town modifying memories and spreading rumors or placing *charms* or *suggestions*. If they notice the presence of the PCs (strangers in town are fairly obvious), they avoid using any magic while being observed.

Samulbrar Manor

One of the first stops the PCs make when they reach Moranay should be Samulbrar Manor itself. This imposing structure stands on a low hill overlooking the town, not quite within the town walls but certainly in the town's mind. Visitors are greeted at the doors of his stately manor by black-liveried guards who allow entrance upon presentation of a royal commission (or with a successful DC 30 Bluff or Diplomacy check).

The guards on duty at the manor are not interested in conversation and refer any questions to the venerable Falder, Lord Samulbrar's loyal butler, to whom they quickly escort the party after they arrive. PCs who make an effort to talk to guards who are not on duty (or to any of the house-servants) can gain the following information with Gather Information checks:

Gather Information check	Result
DC 15	Falder, the butler, is always the last person in the castle to go to bed, and his lamp is always lit when everyone else has gone to sleep.
DC 20	Danik Grycos sometimes leaves the castle alone to hunt. Twice, those hunts have coincided with people or animals being attacked in the town.
DC 25	Falder has been seen in town visiting with Teda Hervyn, the royal constable. He says he visits her just to keep abreast of the goings-on in town.

Falder: The slender, elderly, bespectacled butler of the lord of Moranay has a slow, stiff gait matched by a quiet dignity and impeccable dress. After dismissing the guards that bring the PCs in to meet him in the manor's study, Falder inquires as to their business in Moranay. Unlike most of the locals, Falder is merely indifferent to strangers. A DC 15 Diplomacy check is sufficient to gain entry to see his master the following day (as "the master is feeling unwell today"), while a DC 30 check convinces Falder to let the PCs speak to him immediately. Falder himself is self-effacing and humble, honoring the lord he has served for so long, but has also been charmed by the hags, who have slowly turned him against his master by implanting false memories of corruption and mistreatment. PCs who examine him closely in conversation may attempt DC 20 Sense Motive checks to detect that he is under an enchantment.

Lord Samulbrar: Dark-haired and dark-eyed, the lord of Moranay has a haunted look in his sunken eyes. In kinder days he might have been thought handsome, but now he has the look of a man who has seen too much. Jumpy and nervous in conversation, his eyes shift rapidly and he constantly fingers his sword. He is initially unfriendly, but immediately becomes hostile if PCs bring up the rumors about his vampirism. He gives only angry denials and threats unless they can calm him, either by magic or with a DC 35 Diplomacy check.

Once the party is able to engage him in conversation, he explains the situation in the town from his perspective, centering on his fears that basically everyone in the county is plotting against him. He suspects malcontents who claim loyalty to the Naerindyl family, his predecessors who were dispossessed of their landholdings by the Royal Heralds for their familial insanity.

PCs who make a favorable impression on Lord Samulbrar through roleplaying (or with a DC 40 Diplomacy check, *charm person*, or similar effect) are told his personal history in greater detail (though, of course, he does not know about the involvement of the cult of Shar in his current predicament).

Danik Grycos: Young Danik is out hunting when the PCs arrive, but when he returns at sundown he's eager to speak with them. He is young, athletic, and a bit pugnacious. He looks up to Lord Samulbrar as a father and is immediately hostile to anyone who suggests his liege is a menace; otherwise his starting attitude is indifferent.

Danik's "hunting trips" are a cover; in fact, he's been combing the town himself looking for answers. He believes that most of the troublemakers gather at the Riddle of the Chase. He has asked the royal constable, Teda Hervyn, to do something about the rabble-rousers, but she says she can do nothing as of yet since, in Impiltur, dissatisfaction with a major landowner is not a crime.

If the PCs gain Danik's confidence by roleplaying or with a DC 40 Diplomacy check, he reveals that he's heard rumors that some of the instigators may be allied with agents of the Naerindyl family. Danik knows this family once ruled Agmoth. After they were removed from power by the Royal Heralds of Impiltur, they opted to burn down their mansion rather than live on in disgrace. Danik now plans on visiting the Naerin-

dyl ruins to see if he can learn anything about a possible connection between this family and his master's troubles.

Alas, fate has a cruel surprise in store for Danik—he'll never make it to the ruins. The hags know of his suspicions, and fear he is growing too close to discovering the truth. Halfway along his journey, Danik is ambushed by Tamilla, Vadim, and a quartet of hagspawn berserkers. He is easily captured and brought to the Naerindyl ruinss where Vasyl casts *baleful polymorph* on him to transform him into a robin, after which he is kept in a cage as one of her trophies.

If PCs follow Danik when he leaves for the ruins (requiring a DC 15 Survival check to track him, DC 20 if the tracking PC does not possess darkvision or low-light vision), they may have a chance to prevent his capture and learn about the hags' involvement in one fell swoop. The ambush takes place in an area of light undergrowth (page 87 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). If the PCs turn the tide of battle against them, Tamilla and Vadim flee back to the Naerindyl estate, leaving the hagspawn berserkers to fight to the death.

Danik Grycos **CR 11**

Male Rashemi human rogue 1/monk 10

LN Medium humanoid

Init +7; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6

Languages Common, Damaran

AC 23, touch 18, flat-footed 20; Dodge

hp 73 (11 HD)

Immune non-supernatural diseases

Fort +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9 (+11 vs. enchantment); improved evasion

Spd 60 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +10/+10/+5 (1d10+1)

Ranged mwk bola +11 (1d4 nonlethal)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +8

Atk Options Deflect Arrows, Improved Trip, Stunning Fist 10/day (DC 17), *ki* strike (lawful, magic), sneak attack +1d6

Special Actions wholeness of body (20 hp/day)

Combat Gear *potion of neutralize poison*

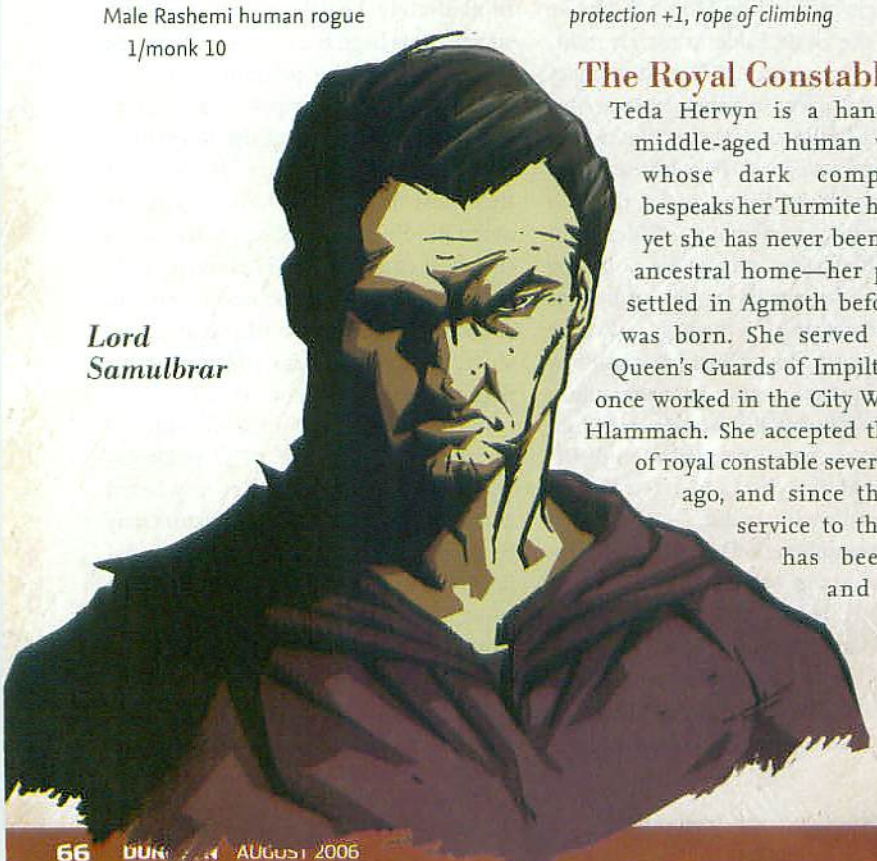
Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

SQ slow fall 50 ft.

Feats Acrobatic, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bola), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +9, Climb +15, Escape Artist +16, Gather Information +5, Hide +17, Jump +27, Knowledge (local) +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +17, Spot +6, Tumble +17

Possessions masterwork bola, *bracers of armor +4, gloves of Dexterity +2, ring of protection +1, rope of climbing*



Lord Samulbrar

The Royal Constable

Teda Hervyn is a handsome, middle-aged human woman whose dark complexion bespeaks her Turmite heritage, yet she has never been to her ancestral home—her parents settled in Agmoth before she was born. She served in the Queen's Guards of Impiltur, and once worked in the City Watch of Hlammach. She accepted the post of royal constable several years ago, and since then her service to the town has been fair and just. Controlling the growing discontent in town (combined with the task of finding out who's behind the recent killings in the region) keeps Teda extremely busy, and as a result it's difficult to arrange a meeting with her. A DC 30 Diplomacy check is enough to secure a meeting with the royal constable in 1d3 days, and a DC 40 check is enough to secure an immediate meeting with her.

If asked about the growing discontent in town, Teda relates that she has been gathering information and sending reports regularly to her superiors—these reports may well be what got the PCs in town in the first place. To date, five dead bodies have been recovered, but they've all been cremated as the wounds and cause of death (punctures to the neck and lack of blood in the corpse) pointed to vampirism—the villagers burned the bodies so they wouldn't rise as undead. Before the bodies were burned, a *speak with dead* revealed that they were all attacked from behind or as they slept; none of the victims saw their attackers.

All five bodies were recovered from the nearby hills and woodlands, and all were those of traveling merchants or visiting pilgrims—no locals have yet been harmed. Since the bodies were discovered a few weeks ago, no new bodies have been found, although Teda believes this is because the vampire is someone local who has since become more careful about disposing of his victims.

Teda is also quick to point out talk of mysterious noises in the night, shadowy figures tapping at windows, bat-like shapes flying about (especially near Lord Samulbrar's manor), animals mysteriously killed, and relatives disappearing and then showing up again in mysterious ways. Although these are little more than rumors, the sheer number of them indicates to Teda that something dire is afoot.

Teda expresses her appreciation for any aid the PCs can supply, and asks them to share any information they acquire with her. She is content to serve as liaison between the PCs and the royal commissioners of

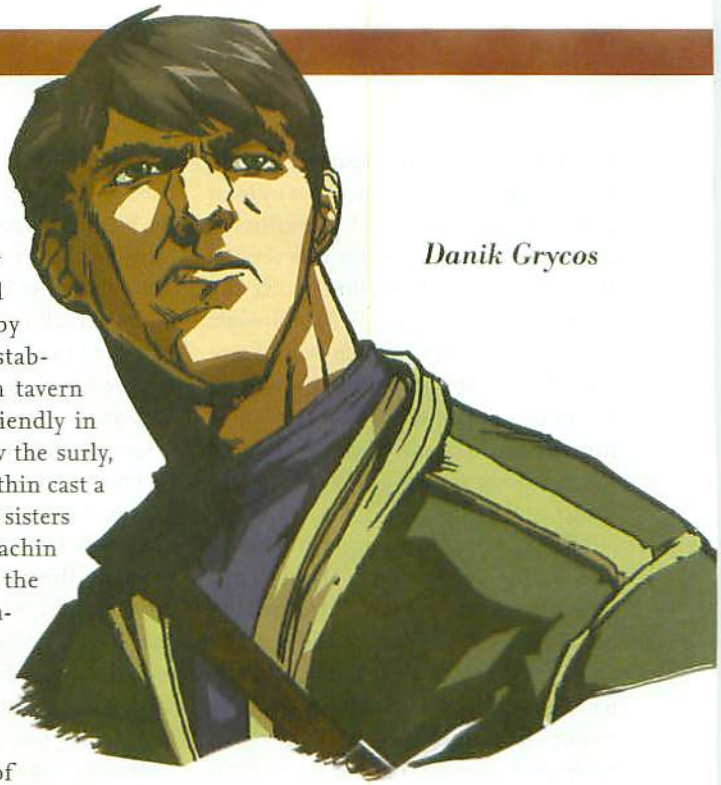
Impiltur, as this matter is well outside her area of expertise. In addition to Rune Tabard, notable royal heralds with an interest in the region include Argent Vambrace (Felbrar Thaeldoom), Blazing Bow (Mornthalbryn Spikestar), and Verdigris Mantle (Daerbras "the Greensage" Ithilnar).

Alas, what Teda has to say is little more than lies, as she was one of the first to be dominated by the hags. The bodies were killed by the hags and doctored to look as if they were victims of a vampire attack, then left for the locals to discover—Teda had been dominated since well before the hags took this step, and was ready to step in and subtly steer suspicion toward Lord Samulbrar. This is also the truth behind her "busy schedule." The hags know it's easier to detect the effects of *dominate person* than *charm person*, and hope to prevent too much contact with the royal constable by limiting the amount of contact she has with others. If the PCs approach her (to question her, report a crime, or for any other reason) she asks for the PCs' credentials before sharing information. After a minute of conversation with her, a DC 15 Sense Motive check allows a PC to note that her actions seem strangely forced, indicating that she's been dominated.

Development: If the PCs allow Teda to serve as a liaison, she makes sure to send the royal heralds documents and reports ensuring that no more investigators will be sent until it's too late. If the PCs discover that she's been dominated and confront her, Teda denies the charge until the *dominate* effect is dispelled. If freed of this effect, she grows pale for a moment before bursting into tears, suddenly realizing exactly what she's done over the last several weeks. The hags have been careful to use *modify memory* on her several times to make her remember being dominated by a vampiric version of Lord Samulbrar, in hopes that if she is freed of the *dominate* effect, her rescuers confront Lord Samulbrar rather than them. Only by dispelling the *dominate* effect and one of the *modify memory* effects can the PCs discover the hags' involvement

The Riddle of the Chase

A sign depicting a fox hiding inside a hollow log while a befuddled hunter stands nearby marks this homey establishment. It is a clean tavern that might be quite friendly in happier times, but now the surly, disgruntled patrons within cast a pall over the place. Twin sisters Niatha and Giandra Sachin work as servers, and the place is owned by a somber man named Olthas Balgerath. Olthas has been in town only a year, but in that time has gained the trust of the townsfolk. He purchased the Riddle of the Chase after the death of its former owner, Ida Merian Chase (who was quite a beauty and reputedly once one of Lord Samulbrar's lovers in her youth).



Danik Grycos

A DC 20 Gather Information check at the Riddle of the Chase reveals that a meeting is scheduled to take place on 30 Marpenoth to discuss the town's "problem." If the PCs ask, it takes a DC 30 Diplomacy or Bluff check to secure a grudging invitation to the meeting, which is to take place here in the tavern. The PCs are warned to leave their weapons in their rooms—the locals are jumpy enough as it is without having armed outsiders around.

This meeting is detailed at the end of this chapter in the section titled "The Rabble is Roused."

Niatha, Giandra, and Olthas have been charmed by the hags, and do their best to encourage the spread of rumors and slander against Lord Samulbrar.

The Rabble is Roused (EL 15)

Olthas Balgerath, owner of the Riddle of the Chase, has agreed to host the town meeting on the "recent unpleasantness." He has asked Teda Hervyn to come and help lead the meeting, which is scheduled to take place on the evening of 30 Marpenoth, the day after the PCs arrive in town. When the time comes, the Riddle of the Chase's large taproom is stuffed with more than 100 townsfolk, representing nearly every family in the area. Olthas and Teda allow people to come forward and voice their concerns and their fears.

After about an hour, Teda introduces a "special guest" who wishes to come forward with new information regarding the situation. This person is Falder, Lord Samulbrar's loyal butler. As he takes the stand, the crowded room grows silent. Falder relates that he has been concerned about his master for some time, and that he believes Lord Samulbrar became cursed during his battle with Lashmistress Durvasala of the Gray Forest several decades ago. Ever since his master returned from that ordeal, he has taken short leaves of absence from his duties. Falder has come to believe that Lord Samulbrar uses these leaves of absence to hunt his victims in other places, so as not to arouse local suspicion. He can provide specific dates and locations for his master's "hunting trips," and Teda Hervyn can corroborate that at these times and locations a string of unsolved murders and strange disappearances took place.

As the first murmurs of discontent and anger begin to ripple through the crowd, Falder goes on, saying that during a trip to Rashemen his lord

encountered a fellow vampire, Danik Grycos, who had been found out by local authorities and needed Samulbrar's aid in escaping. To pay for this service, Danik provided Samulbrar with the recipe for a vile elixir called the *draught of doubled darkness*, which would not only double the size and strength of his beastly form, but would also allow him to move about during daylight hours as long as he avoided exposure to direct sunlight.

In honor of this unexpected boon as well as his alliance with Danik, Lord Samulbrar introduced a two-headed bat emblem to his heraldic device. His claims that this was the token of some witches' coven he defeated in Rashemen is a lie—according to Teda's contacts in Rashemen, this symbol has never been used in Rashemen.

Falder is in tears by this point. He has dearly loved his master for many years, guiding him and looking after him since his parents' murder many years ago. He believes that his master used his vampiric powers to dull his mind and his conscience, but that recently Lord Samulbrar has grown careless. When he let the domination lapse and forgot to renew it, Falder continued to feign loyalty until he could bring the truth to the citizens of Moranay, tonight.

With that, Falder steels himself and says that he must return to the manor, lest his master grow suspicious of his absence. He begs the villagers to wait until dawn, then gather torches to march on the estate. His master should be asleep in his home at this time, giving the mob the best chance to burn his accursed home and his hateful undead body to the ground.

After Falder leaves, Teda Hervyn takes the stage to lead the meeting, at which point the meeting devolves into shouts and arguments from townsfolk urging immediate action. If nothing is done, every person in attendance returns to their homes to gather friends and family and prepare for the dawn's assault on Samulbrar Manor. This assault is detailed in Chapter Three.

If the PCs are present for this meeting, they can be the voice of reason and argue against action with opposed Diplomacy checks. Falder has only Diplomacy +2, so the PCs should have little trouble in winning the crowd over with these checks. In order to defuse the crowd and delay the mob's assault on Samulbrar Manor, the PCs need to succeed at five out of eight opposed Diplomacy checks to sway the mob away from frenzy and anger.

Unfortunately for the PCs, only the first two of their eight chances are against Falder. Once they speak up against him, Teda takes the stage against them to refute their claims. Or in this case, the hag Vasyl, who is disguised as Teda (the actual, dominated royal constable remains in her home during the entire meeting). With her Diplomacy +12, she'll be tougher competition but not completely insurmountable (especially if one of the characters has specialized in this skill). Vasyl uses *veil* to disguise herself as one of the townsfolk, giving her Disguise +30 against Spot checks. Turova (one of the hagspawn captains) is here as well, disguised as a nondescript farmer thanks to the same *veil* spell (Disguise +18). Although she doesn't take part in the debate, she remains close by Vasyl's side in the event that things go poorly.

If the PCs manage to make their five Diplomacy checks, the crowd fills with doubt and confusion, and the meeting swiftly breaks up as the individuals return home to mull over the party's words. Unfortunately, this only buys them 1d4+2 days before another town meeting is called. Give a +5 circumstance bonus on any Diplomacy checks made by the hags and their minions, since by this point the locals have grown even more anxious. This cycle continues until the PCs cannot stop the mob. If the PCs don't manage to break up the crowd, things proceed as if they hadn't been present at the meeting at all.

If the PCs unmask Vasyl, she attempts to Bluff the townsfolk, claiming that the party is in league with the vampires and have used their magic powers to try to create dissension in the town and discredit her. She only needs to make a DC 20 Bluff check to succeed, and is thus automatically successful unless the PCs successfully oppose her Bluff check with their own Diplomacy check. If successful, she rushes out of the building in tears as the crowd surges angrily around the PCs. If the PCs strike out at the crowd, it immediately mobilizes into a mob (use the stats on page 80 for the torch-bearing mob, but remove the burning rage ability).

If, on the other hand, the PCs unmask Vasyl and convince the crowd that she is not what she appears to be, panic sets in. The crowd flees in terror and Vasyl curses and spits at the PCs. She's not ready to fight them at this time, though, and instead grabs her hagspawn ally and uses four *dimension door* spells to put as much distance between them and the PCs as she can, after she casts *pass without trace* and the two flee back to the Naerindyl ruins.

Vasyl Yauheni: hp 141; see page 74.

Turova, hagspawn captain: hp 102; see page 73.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs manage to convince the crowd to delay their action against Lord Samulbrar, award them experience as if they had defeated a CR 15 creature in combat. If they unmask Vasyl as well, and convince the crowd of her true nature, increase this award to a CR 17 award.

Chapter Two: The Naerindyl Ruins

In Chapter One, the PCs confirm that there are powerful feelings of discontent among the locals, and likely come to suspect that these feelings of discontent are the result of magical manipulation rather than factual conditions. They may have even discovered some of the hags, unmasking them in private or public and forcing them to flee. Yet despite all of this, there is little in Chapter One in the way of clues that can point them toward the hags' lair in the ruins of the Naerindyl Estate. In order to find this link, the PCs must resort to magic.

Once the PCs start casting spells like *divination*, *commune*, and *contact other plane*, you should use the results of these spells to subtly steer them in the direction of the Naerindyl ruins. A possible cryptic result from a divination asking about the situation in town could be

something like, "Bats and brooding do not a vampire sire—seek instead remnants of ancient noble's pyre." A DC 30 Knowledge (nobility and royalty) check allows a character to remember that the previous rulers of the region, the Naerindyl family, perished in a tragic fire that consumed their manor house. This check gains a +2 synergy bonus if the character has at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (history) and another +2 bonus if he has at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (local—Impiltur).

If the PCs manage to dispel the *dominate person/charm person* and *modify memory* effects on Teda, Falder, or Niatha or Giandra Sachin, they can learn more. The hags have all brought these pawns to their lair near the Naerindyl ruins at one point or another, and although they kept them blindfolded for much of the journey, any of them can confirm that they were taken north. None know much more about the site, alas, but this should be enough to get the PCs headed in the right direction.

If the PCs ask around town about the Naerindyl family and estate, they can uncover the following lore.

Gather Information Check	Result
DC10	Directions to the old Naerindyl vineyard and estate. The locals believe the place is haunted today, so most avoid it.
DC 15	Most of the Naerindyl estate was destroyed in a fire around the time that they were dispossessed.
DC 25	The fire at the Naerindyl estate was set by Grissom Naerindyl himself, who elected to burn his family and their holdings rather than face the shame of exile or imprisonment.

The Naerindyl Estate

The Naerindyl Estate ruins lie approximately seven miles northwest of Moranay, along an overgrown and lonely track that winds up into the hills. Characters who check for tracks find nothing, as the hags use *pass without trace* when moving to and from the ruins. When the PCs reach the estate, read them the following.

The overgrown track emerges from a dense copse of trees and rises up the next hill to the ruined estate of the Naerindyl family. Little remains of the manor itself but a burnt-out foundation, partially overgrown with thorny shrubbery and stunted trees. The stone wall that once enclosed the grounds still stands in places. Two smaller buildings and what appears to be an overgrown vineyard sit just to the southeast of the ruined mansion. About a half-mile to the east, a glittering pond shimmers in a hollow between the hills.

The manor grounds themselves are overgrown with shrubbery (–2 penalty to Move Silently and Tumble checks). The PCs should be able to investigate the ruins without interruption, as the hags themsevles spend most of their time in the Servant Compound to the east (which is hidden under the illusory pond).

Note that the majority of the encounters in this area should be relatively simple for a group of 15th-level characters to handle—this is intentional. This area is intended as little more than a diversion and a false front created by the hags to support the rumors of vampiric activity in the area. The fact that the battles are so easy should in fact give the players a hint that their true enemies are located elsewhere.

1. Scorched Earth (EL 13)

All that remains of the great manor house that once stood here is the rough outline of foundation stones, scorched and blackened by fire. Scarcely one stone remains upon another, and many of the stones and bricks show the scars of being hacked and smashed to bits.

When the Naerindyls were dispossessed, the family's patriarch burned the house to the ground rather than face the indignation of life as a commoner or prisoner. A daytime investigation of the ruins soon reveals that there is little of interest remaining, unless the PCs examine the scorched earth at area **1A**. A DC 15 Search check reveals a shallow pit filled with scorched bones and smashed pieces of headstones—after the fire, greedy locals sifted through the ruins to claim what valuables they could and unceremoniously dumped the burnt remains of those who had perished in this shallow grave.

Creature: *Detect evil* reveals an aura of strong evil in the area of the mass grave—the spirits of the Naerindyl family still haunt this site. If the PCs dig through the rubble here, they quickly arouse the ire of these insane ghosts—at night, all the PCs need to do to enrage the undead is walk within ten feet of the grave. When awakened, nearly fifty insane spirits rise up from the grave as a roiling cloud of shrieking, crying allips. The allip horde immediately attacks any living creature present, but does not pursue foes further than a few hundred feet.

These allips were once nobles and servants, but one of them is something more. Grissom Naerindyl, the man who made the decision to burn his house and family, now exists as a dread wraith. Powerless during the day, he rises to aid the allip horde in slaying the living if the PCs arouse their wrath during the night. Like the allips, he does not pursue the living far from his ancestral grounds.

Allip Horde **CR 11**

NE Gargantuan undead (incorporeal, mob of 48 Medium undead)

Monster Manual 10, *Dungeon Master's Guide II* 60

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +7, Spot +7

Aura babble

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10

hp 195 (30 HD)

Immune incorporeal traits, mob traits, undead traits

Fort +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +17

Spd fly 20 ft. (perfect)

Melee mob (2d6 Wisdom drain)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +15; **Grp** —

Abilities Str —, Dex 12, Con —, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ madness, mob anatomy

Feats Improved Bull Rush, *Improved Initiative*, Improved Overrun, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Hide –4, Intimidate +3, Listen +7, Search +4, Spot +7

Babble (Su) All sane creatures within 60 feet must succeed on a DC 25 Will save or be affected as though by a *hypnotism* spell for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, mind-affecting compulsion. Creatures that save are immune to it for 24 hours.

Madness (Su) Anyone targeting the allip horde with a thought detection, mind control, or telepathic ability makes direct contact with its tortured mind and takes 2d6 points of Wisdom damage.

Wisdom Drain (Su) The allip horde causes 2d6 points of Wisdom drain to any creature it touches. For each such drain, it gains 5 temporary hit points.

Grissom Naerindyl, dread wraith: hp 104; *Monster Manual* 258.

2. Barrelhouse (EL 9)

This plain building is cracked and crumbling, with ivy overtaking much of its remaining walls. Wide clear cracks run through the brick and remaining plaster, as well as across the tiled roof.

This building was once the storage room and cellar for wine barrels. It has now become a roost for a colony of bats, with further secrets awaiting in the cellar below.

Stavrala has cast an *unhallow* spell in the cellar, but its area of effect encompasses the entire barrelhouse. Attempts to turn undead within the barrelhouse suffer a –4 penalty, while rebuke attempts gain a +4 profane bonus. All creatures within (including the bat swarms) gain the benefit of a *magic circle against good* as well as *resist fire* that provides fire resistance 30.

Creatures: A colony of twelve bat swarms roosts in this building. They have been affected by the haunted taint of the Naerindyl estate and are very aggressive, attacking any creatures that enter their home. If the main doors are opened or a creature explores one of the large gaps in the south wall, the swarm is entitled to Listen and Spot checks to notice them; their blindsense allows them to notice even invisible lurkers.

Bat swarms (12): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 237.

Tactics: The bat swarms engulf as many creatures as they can. Nevertheless, these swarms should pose little threat to the PCs. The true danger lies in the commotion they make.

Trap: Each of the ramps leading down to the lower level is warded with a *greater glyph of warding* cast by Stavrala, set to strike any thinking (Intelligence 3 or higher) creature traversing the ramp who does not openly display an unholy symbol of Shar.

***Greater glyph of warding* (spell):** CR 7; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [spell—*darkbolt*], 18th-level cleric, hurls seven bolts of darkness [+22 ranged touch, 2d8 points of damage per hit, DC 24 Will save each hit to avoid being dazed for 1 round]); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Development: The ettin skeletons in area 4 are entitled to DC 0 Listen checks to notice any combat transpiring above.

3. Bottlery

This building is far more decrepit than the adjacent barrelhouse, showing signs of having been burned at some point long in the past. The roof has long since collapsed, and only the north and east walls remain.

This building's interior is strewn with rubble, shards of broken glass, and twisted metal. Treat the interior of the building as if it were trapped with caltrops (*Player's Handbook* 126).

4. Wine Cellar (EL 9)

The now-empty racks lining the walls bear mute testimony to the former use of this place for storing wine barrels.

The wine cellar is a shared space connected to the two buildings above.

Trap: A DC 30 Search check of the eastern storage closet between the two ramps reveals a cunningly hidden plug in the floor that forms a trapdoor atop a 20-foot-deep shaft to area 6. Only worshipers of Shar can open this trapdoor without peril; all other creatures trigger a *greater glyph of warding*. Tiny cracks and holes in the altar are sufficient to enable a creature in gaseous form to pass through to area 6 below.

***Greater glyph of warding* (spell):** CR 7; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [spell—*slay living*], 18th-level cleric, DC 27 Fortitude partial); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Creatures: Hidden alongside the ramps from area 2 are a quartet of animated ettin skeletons created by Stavrala. These undead converge upon anyone who enters this area without openly bearing an unholy symbol of Shar. They do not pursue creatures that flee up the ramps.

Ettin Skeletons (4): hp: 65 each; *Monster Manual* 227.

5. Wine Racks

The massive wooden racks in this long hall may have once held thousands of wine bottles, but now bear only dust and cobwebs.

These racks have been thoroughly looted—nothing of interest remains.

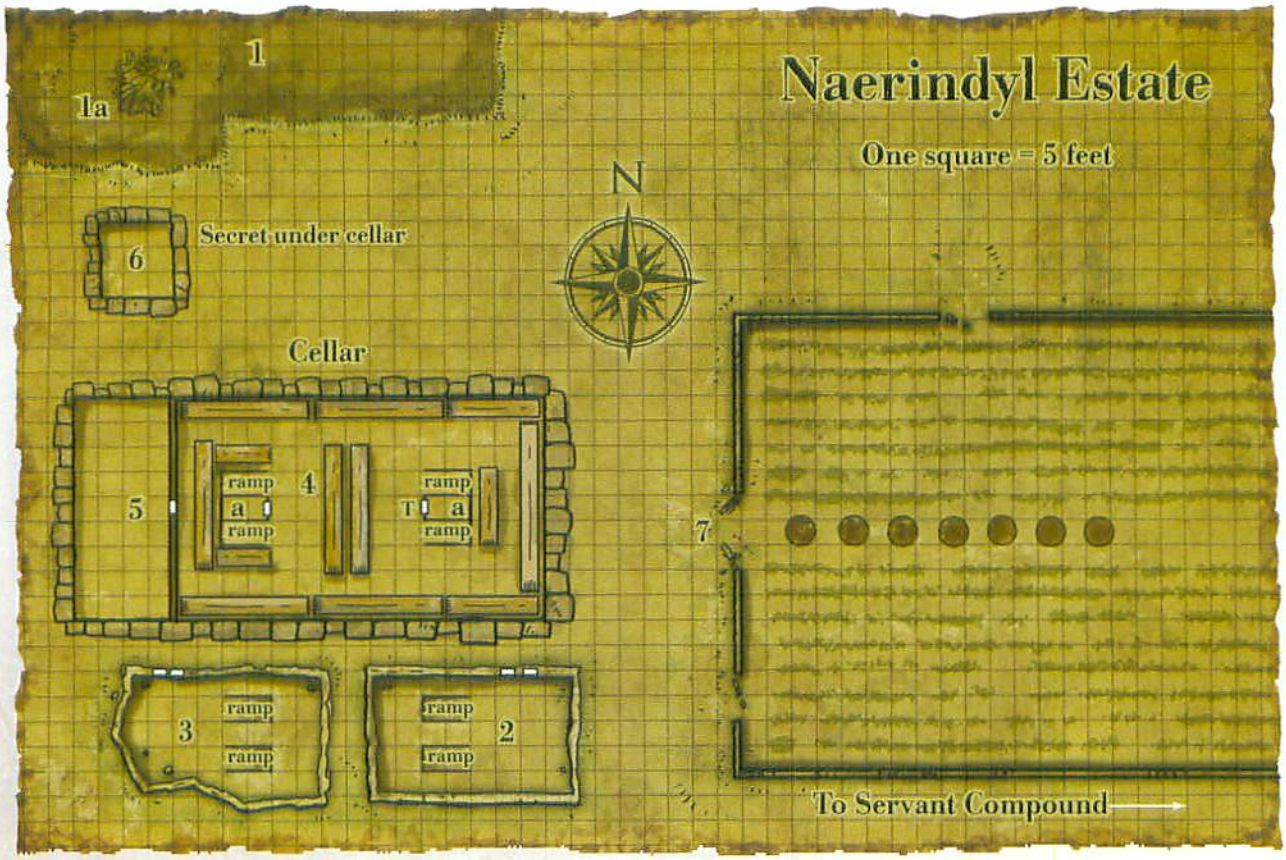
6. Stavrala's Bolt-Hole (EL 7)

This small antechamber is cold, dark, and depressing. A writing desk and chair sit against one wall opposite a pile of blankets and two coffins of polished black wood.

This room serves a dual purpose. In part, it serves Stavrala as an escape route, as it is the destination for her *word of recall*. She also knows that investigators might well look to the Naerindyl estate as a place where villains might lurk, and has placed a number of false leads here to throw investigations off the trail.

One coffin contains dirt from Rashemen and the other from the Gray Forest. The party could determine this fact through magic or with a DC 40 Knowledge (geography) or (nature) check and might connect these with Danik and Samulbrar.

Inside the desk are a number of disjointed, rambling messages about



strange changes in behavior, paranoia, strange blackouts in memory, and a fear that something terrible may be happening, finally leading to a realization and resignation to a cursed fate as a vampire. A few of the notes have tiny drips of dried blood on the page. All of these have been forged in Samulbrar's hand by Tamilla and require a DC 44 Forgery check to discern as fakes.

Of course, while the hags have taken great pains to make this chamber look like it's been used by vampires, the deception isn't completely perfect. A character who examines the coffins and makes a DC 30 Knowledge (religion) check realizes that the soil is untainted and has never been used as a bed by any sort of undead, much less a vampire.

Trap: The writing desk is secured with an amazing lock (DC 40 Open Lock) and trapped with a *greater glyph of warding*.

***Greater glyph of warding* (spell)**: CR 7; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [spell—*slay living*], 18th-level cleric, DC 27 Fortitude partial); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

7. Overgrown Vineyard (EL 7)

A crumbling wall surrounds the overgrown remnants of what must once have been a well-tended vineyard. Now, however, the tangled interior is littered with rusted tools, and some of the vine-tresses have been hacked apart at random. Nonetheless, huge bunches of grapes hang heavy on the vines. One of the large wooden gates seems mostly intact, if weather-beaten, while the other is battered and burned, the remnants swinging in the early autumn breeze.

This vineyard was once the pride of the Naerindyl family, from which they made their well-regarded wines. The madness of the Naerindyls, however, afflicted even this place, leaving behind a residue that taints the fruit within. The tangled vines of the vineyard count as heavy undergrowth (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 87).

Those who sample the strangely juicy grapes from the vineyard find them to be delicious and slightly intoxicating. Unfortunately, the taint of the Naerindyl spirits make these grapes dangerous to consume. One hour after a creature eats them, he must make a DC 14 Fortitude save to avoid taking 3d6 points of Wisdom damage as the intoxication leads to forgetfulness, hallucinations, lethargy, and even unconsciousness.

Creature: Although the hags forbid their minions from feasting on these grapes after they discovered the fruit's detrimental effects, several of the hagspawn berserkers have become addicted to them and regularly sneak off to snatch a few handfuls. One such hagspawn, a berserker named Tereshk, came up here a few hours before the PCs arrive, gorged himself, and took enough damage to be reduced to 0 Wisdom. The berserker now lies in a coma-like state in the middle of the vineyard. At his current state, with a –2 Will save, the hagspawn is particularly susceptible to compulsion spells, making him an excellent source of information if the PCs can magically control him and then restore at least 1 point of Wisdom to waken him. Tereshk can easily direct the PCs to the actual lair

of the hags in the servants compound to the east.

If he wakes under his own control, Tereshk quickly realizes the danger he's in if his commanders realize what he's done, and attacks the PCs at once in an attempt to silence them.

Since he wandered up here in secret, Tereshk did not have a *pass without trace* spell in effect. His route from the servants compound to this area can be retraced with a DC 15 Survival check by a character with the Track feat.

Tereshk, hagspawn berserker: hp 75; see page 73.

The Servant Compound

Approximately half a mile to the east of the Naerindyl ruins sits a sizable pool of algae-thick water. This pool is, in fact, a *mirage arcana* (CL 9th, DC 18 Will save to disbelieve if interacted with) placed by the hags to hide a cluster of semi-intact buildings that once served as barracks and storehouses for the servants who worked for the Naerindyls.

These buildings lie below the illusory pond's surface in a low depression between the hills, surrounded by steep slopes covered with heavy undergrowth (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, 89) except for a narrow, well-hidden path (DC 30 Search check to locate the path; characters with at least 5 ranks in Survival gain a +2 synergy bonus on this Search check). Originally placed in this defile to keep them out of the eyeline of the Naerindyl manor's windows, the buildings now serve as the primary lair for the hags and their minions. The ground surrounding these buildings has been cleared down to the soil.

The hags and their servants are generally kept busy in Moranay and the environs, working to uphold and maintain the rumors of Lord Samulbrar's vampiric curse. As a result, the full complement of hags is rarely present at this site. The sole exception is that all of the hags convene at Stavrala's abode (area 5) for an hour just before dawn to share information and renew any of their covey-based spell-like abilities that require joint participation.

Three hagspawn berserkers are always on guard, and if they notice intruders they alert their fellows and attack on sight. Once combat begins, any creatures within the buildings themselves quickly mobilize to defend the lair.

1. Women's Bunkhouse (EL 14 or 16)

This low-slung building has the look of a dormitory. Rows of crude bunk beds are laid close together, their mattresses long since stolen or rotted away. Empty cabinets built into the headboards give mute testimony to the many workers who once lived here. At the midsection of the building, a sturdy spiral staircase leads to a small loft overlooking the building's open interior.

Creatures: This building, once a dwelling for female servants of the Naerindyls, has been claimed by the hag assassin Tamilla. She and her lover Vadim (one of the hagspawn captains) share the loft that overlooks the room, while four berserkers take their beds below. One of these berserkers is always on patrol around the exterior of the building—the others stay near their beds, sleeping or playing at cards and dice. The berserkers themselves are all hagspawns—the hideous male offspring of human and hag, hulking creatures that look like brutish humans with cruel red eyes.

Tamilla herself often roams Moranay and the surrounding area, making mischief and waylaying unwary miners or travelers to further the covey's purposes. She was the one responsible for the recent deaths, as well as for making them appear to be vampire victims. Tamilla keeps a tiny relic of each victim (usually ears, fingers, or patches of skin with tattoos), nailing them to her "trophy wall" above her bed. As a result, she is only present 25% of the time. If Tamilla is here, there is a 75% chance that Vadim is here as well; this chance drops to 25% if she is not here.

Hagspawn Berserkers (4) **CR 9**
Hagspawn barbarian 2/fighter 6
NE Medium monstrous humanoid
Unapproachable East 64
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +1
Languages Common, Giant

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 23; Dodge, Mobility, uncanny dodge
hp 75 (8HD)
SR 19
Fort +12, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

Spd 30 ft.
Melee *+1 berserker bastard sword* +14/+9 (1d10+7/17–20)
Ranged mwk sling +10 (1d4+4)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +12
Atk Options Spring Attack
Special Actions rage 1/day
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*

Abilities Str 18, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 8
Feats Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Critical (bastard sword), Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)
Skills Climb +12, Jump +6, Listen +6
Possessions *+1 breastplate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 berserker bastard sword,* masterwork sling with 10 bullets, *+1 cloak of resistance*

Rage While raging, a hagspawn berserker's statistics change as follows:
AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21
hp 91
Fort +14, **Will** +6
Melee +3 *berserker bastard sword* +18/+13 (1d10+11/17–20)
Ranged mwk sling +10 (1d4+6)
Grp +12
Abilities Str 22, Con 20
Skills Climb +14, Jump +8

Vadim, Hagspawn Captain **CR 12**
Hagspawn rogue 5/fighter 4/barbarian 2
NE Medium monstrous humanoid
Unapproachable East 64
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +4
Languages Common, Giant

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 21; Dodge, Mobility, uncanny dodge
hp 102 (11 HD)
SR 22
Fort +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2; evasion

Spd 40 ft.
Melee *+1 berserker bastard sword* +15/+10 (1d10+7/17–20)
Ranged mwk sling +12 (1d4+4)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +13
Atk Options Spring Attack, sneak attack +3d6
Special Actions rage 1/day
Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure serious wounds*

Abilities Str 18, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Critical (bastard sword), Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)
Skills Balance +3, Disguise +8, Climb +17, Hide +19, Intimidate +10, Jump +18, Listen +6, Spot +4, Tumble +10
Possessions *+2 chain shirt, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 berserker bastard* sword, masterwork sling with 10 bullets, *gauntlets of ogre power, ring of chameleon power*

Rage While raging, a hagspawn captain's statistics change as follows:
AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19
hp 124
Fort +14, **Will** +4
Melee +3 *berserker bastard sword* +19/+14 (1d10+11/17–20)
Ranged mwk sling +12 (1d4+6)
Grp +15
Abilities Str 22, Con 22
Skills Climb +19, Jump +20

Tamilla Murck **CR 13**
Female annis hag rogue 2/assassin 8
NE Large monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual 143
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +13, Spot +13
Languages Common, Damaran, Giant

AC 30, touch 16, flat-footed 30; improved uncanny dodge
hp 134 (17 HD); **DR** 2/bludgeoning
SR 19
Fort +10 (+14 vs. poison), **Ref** +21, **Will** +7; evasion

Spd 40 ft.
Melee 2 claws +22 (1d6+8/19–20) and bite +16 (1d6+4)
Ranged *+1 shuriken* +19/+14/+9 (1d2+8)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +26
Atk Options improved grab (claw), rake 1d6+8, rend 2d6+12, sneak attack +5d6
Special Actions death attack (DC 21)
Combat Gear *wand of modify memory* (12 charges), *wand of greater invisibility* (5 charges), *potion of fly*, purple worm poison (injury DC 24, 1d6 Str/2d6 Str, 4 doses)
Spells Known (CL 8th)
4th (1/day)—*dimension door*
3rd (4/day)—*false life, magic circle against good, misdirection, nondetection*
2nd (4/day)—*darkness, invisibility, pass without trace, spider climb*
1st (4/day)—*feather fall, ghost sound* (DC 14), *jump, true strike*
Annis Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)
3/day—*disguise self, fog cloud*
Hag Covey Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)
3/day—*animate dead, bestow curse* (DC 17), *control weather, dream, forcecage, mind blank, mirage arcana* (DC 18), *polymorph, veil* (DC 19), *vision*

Abilities Str 26, Dex 20, Con 18, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 12
SQ hide in plain sight, poison use, trapfinding
Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (claw), Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (claw)
Skills Balance +7, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +10 (+12 acting), Forgery +24, Hide +17, Intimidate +13, Jump +14, Listen +13, Move Silently +21, Spot +13, Tumble +23
Possessions combat gear, *+1 shuriken* (12), *gloves of Dexterity +2, ring of protection +2, ring of force shield, bracers of armor +2, Heward's handy haversack,* silk pouch of diamond dust worth 150 gp, six silver

earrings with black sapphires worth 600 gp each, masterwork forgery kit, disguise kit, 238 gp

Hag Covey Spell-Like Abilites (Sp) To use these spell-like abilities, Tamilla must be within 10 feet of both Stavrala and Vasyl, and all three must participate. Hag covey spell-like abilities require a full-round action to use.

Tactics: The hagspawn sentries shout an alarm if they notice intruders, waking their fellows and moving to engage. They use Spring Attack to dance in and out of melee, using the rows of bunk beds for cover while spreading out and trying to draw their opponents away from one another so that Tamilla and Vadim (if present) can set up sneak attacks.

Tamilla uses her *wand of greater invisibility* on herself and Vadim, who then uses Spring Attack and Tumble as necessary to get into flanking position and move out of harm's way, and may Tumble and/or Jump across the tops of bunk beds if that gives him an advantage. Tamilla herself spends the first few rounds of combat observing the party from hiding while she envenoms her claws with purple worm poison. She picks out a spellcaster upon whom to make a death attack, after which she is happy to wade into close combat, hoping to rend her foes to pieces. She dimension doors (with Vadim, if possible) to area 5 if she finds herself in real trouble.

Treasure: Each of the hagspawn berserkers keeps 200 gp stashed in a small, locked chest (DC 30 Open Lock) near their bed, along with various personal effects.

In Tamilla and Vadim's loft is a similar locked chest with a superior lock (DC 40 Open Lock). Within the chest, underneath clothing and personal items, is a sack of 80 pp and 600 gp. The chest is covered with a bolt of silver Shou Lung silk worth 100 gp.

Sitting beside the bed on a nightstand of polished river-stone is a duskwood drinking cup inlaid with silver worth 300 gp, an obsidian statue of a unicorn with hooves, horn, and eyes of silver pearl worth 2,000 gp, and a silver cage of antique elvish design, its bars styled as twisted vines, worth 750 gp. This cage may contain a rather distressed robin, formerly Danik Grycos (if the hags managed to ambush him and cast *baleful polymorph* on him).

2. Well

In the center of the open area between the buildings sits a circular well of brick fitted with two winches for drawing water.

This well is only 30 feet deep; the water tastes a little metallic but is safe to drink.

3. Ruined Building (CR 8)

This large building appears to have mostly collapsed, its two doors broken and hanging open. The few charred timbers sticking up from the ruined walls suggest fire must have been involved.

4. Men's Bunkhouse (EL 14 or 16)

This sturdy brick building is overgrown with ivy and crawling vines. Rows of crude bunk beds are laid close together, their mattresses long since stolen or rotted away. At the midsection of the building, a sturdy spiral staircase leads to a small loft overlooking the building's open interior.

Creatures: As with area 1, this building has been claimed by one of the hags and her minions. Vasyl Yauheni, the green hag bard responsible for the majority of the *dominates, charms,* and *modify memories* plaguing Moranay, dwells in the loft here. She spends a large amount of her time in town, sowing false memories and watching over her charmed and dominated minions. As a result, there's only a 20% chance that she's here the first time the PCs arrive in the area.

Four hagspawn berserkers and a hagspawn captain (Turova) dwell here as well. As with area 1, there's always one berserker on patrol around the perimeter of the building.

VASYL YAUHENI **CR 14**

Female green hag bard 8/shadow adept 4

NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Monster Manual 143, *Player's Guide to Faerûn* 73

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft., low-light vision; Listen +13, Spot +13

Languages Common, Damaran, Giant

AC 31, touch 14, flat-footed 29

hp 141 (21 HD)

SR 18

Fort +13, **Ref** +17, **Will** +19; shadow defense +1

Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee *+1 frost rapier* +21/+16/+11/+6 (1d6+4/18–20 plus 1d6 cold)

Base Atk +17; **Grp** +20

Special Actions bardic music 8/day (countersong, *fascinate,* inspire competence, inspire courage +2, *suggestion*), weakness

Combat Gear *staff of transmutation* (8 charges), scroll of *mass cure moderate wounds,* scroll of *sympathetic vibration*

Spells Known (CL 16th)

4th (4/day)—*dimension door, dominate person* (DC 23), *modify memory* (DC 23)

3rd (5/day)—*charm monster* (DC 22), *cure serious wounds, dispel magic, haste*

2nd (5/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 19), *glitterdust* (DC 19), *mirror image, rage*

1st (5/day)—*charm person* (DC 20), *cure light wounds, silent image* (DC 20), *ventriloquism* (DC 20)

0 (3/day)—*detect magic, lullaby* (DC 19), *mage hand* (CL 15th), *mending* (CL 15th), *message* (CL 15th), *prestidigitation*

Green hag Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)

At will—*dancing lights, disguise self, ghost sound* (DC 16), *invisibility, pass without trace, tongues, water breathing*

3/day—quickened *invisibility*

Hag Covey Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)

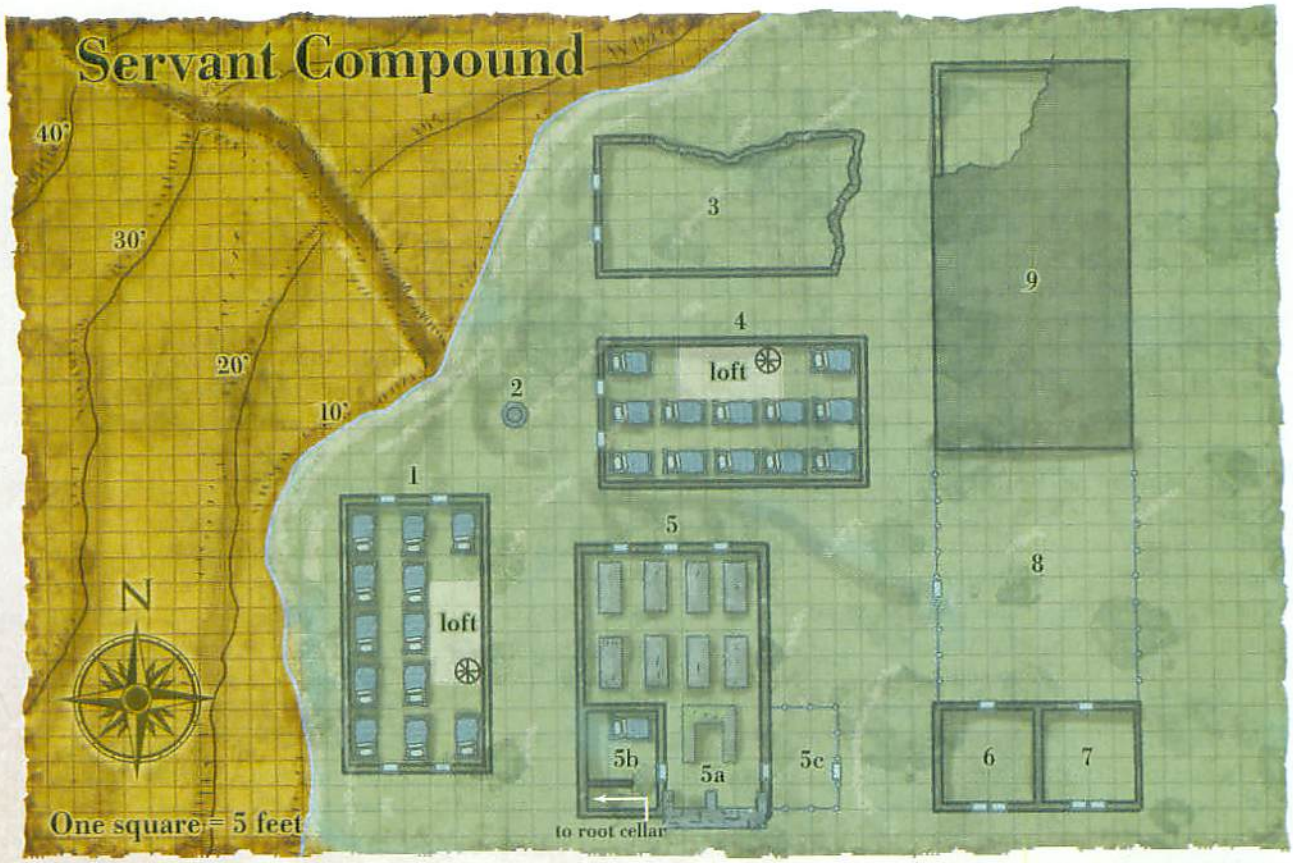
3/day—*animate dead, bestow curse* (DC 17), *control weather, dream, forcecage, mind blank, mirage arcana* (DC 18), *polymorph, veil* (DC 19), *vision*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 26

SQ bardic knowledge +10, mimicry

Feats Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Extend Spell, Insidious Magic, Pernicious Magic, Practiced Spellcaster, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*invisibility*), Shadow Weave Magic, Still Spell, Tenacious Magic

Skills Bluff +20, Concentration +19, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +18 (+20 acting), Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (nobility and



royalty) +8, Listen +13, Perform (stringed instrument) +30, Spellcraft +12, Spot +13, Use Magic Device +24

Possessions combat gear, *+2 chain shirt, +1 frost rapier, cloak of Charisma +4, ring of protection +2, scarab of resistance +2* (as *cloak of resistance +2*), *Heward's handy haversack*, disguise kit, masterwork violin, bracelet carved from a single large bloodstone worth 3,000 gp

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Hag Covey Spell-Like Abilites (Sp) To use these spell-like abilities, Vasyl must be within 10 feet of both Tamilla and Stavrala, and all three must participate. Hag covey spell-like abilities require a full-round action to use.

Shadow Defense (Ex) Vasyl gains a +1 profane bonus on saving throws against spells from the schools of enchantment, illusion, and necromancy, as well as spells with the darkness descriptor.

Shield of Shadows (Su) Vasyl can surround herself with a globe of purple-black force as a standard action. This grants the benefits of a *shield* spell and provides concealment (20% miss chance) against melee and ranged attacks. She can see and reach through the shield, so it does not provide concealment or cover to opponents. She may use her shield of shadows for up to 12 rounds per day. The duration need not be consecutive. Creating or dismissing the shield of shadows is a standard action.

Hagspawn Berserkers (4): hp 75 each; see page 73.

Turova, hagspawn captain: hp 102; see page 73.

Tactics: The hagspawn (including Turova) use the same tactics against intruders as those in area 1. If she's present, Vasyl inspires courage and casts *rage* as soon as possible to enhance her allies' fighting prowess. If she has the chance, she casts defensive spells like *mirror image* and *haste* and shrouds herself with her shield of shadows. In battle, she attempts to charm or dominate warrior-types or uses her staff to cast *disintegrate* or *baleful polymorph* on a spellcaster or rogue (using the staff requires a DC 20 Use Magic Device check). Remember that her caster level is only 15th with transmutation spells since she uses the Shadow Weave. Vasyl likes to attack from hiding, using her quickened *invisibility* spell-like ability after each attack for the first few rounds.

Treasure: Each of the hagspawn berserkers keeps 200 gp stashed in a small, locked chest (DC 30 Open Lock) near their bed, along with various personal effects. Turova's chest also contains 35 pp.

An armoire of inlaid silver pine from Rashemen (worth 2,500 gp but weighing 500 pounds) can be found in Vasyl's loft. Inside the armoire hang a variety of disguises and outfits in Impilturian styles, ranging from commoners' work clothes to a number of well-made noble's outfits. The clothing is worth approximately 400 gp in total. If he's been captured, Danik's gear is stored in here as well.

The armoire has a false bottom that can be found with a DC 30 Search check. Unlocking this false bottom requires a DC 40 Open Lock check. Within is 130 pp and 500 gp in separate bags as well as three potions in crystal vials—a *potion of cat's grace*, a *potion of darkvision*, and a *potion of protection from arrows*.

Mounted on the wall above the bed is a tapestry of Shou Lung silk that dis-

plays geometric patterns in yellow, blue, and black; it's worth 1,300 gp.

5. Mess Hall (EL 14 or 18)

This long, low building has two large brick chimneys, each cracked and leaning. The room itself features a number of long tables, and in a few places piles of blankets suggesting makeshift beds.

Stavrala and her direct underlings have taken this building as their own. The hagspawn berserkers and their captain Mindaugus made makeshift bunks on the tables in the main mess hall.

Area **5a** was once the mess hall's kitchen, but the hags seldom allow fires to be lit here, since the smoke from the chimneys would reveal their presence. Area **5b** was once the pantry and larder, with stairs leading down to a large root cellar below. The shelves here are mostly empty, save for a few small bags, barrels, and boxes. Stavrala's fine-quality feather bed sits to the north in this room next to a nightstand with several sparkling stones arranged on it. Area **5c** was once used to keep chickens and other small animals. It is now empty save for weeds.

Creatures: Four hagspawn berserkers and their captain, Mindagus, dwell in the makeshift beds in the main room. Although there's only a 25% chance that Stavrala is in area **5b** when the PCs arrive, an ally she called with *planar ally* is always on guard there. This is Misango, a barbed devil.

STAVRALA NAZAERLYTH **CR 17**

Female shrieking hag cleric 6/nightcloak 8 (Shar)

NE Medium monstrous humanoid

Unapproachable East 64

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +20, Spot +16

Languages Common, Damaran, Giant; shadow talk

AC 33, touch 14, flat-footed 33

hp 221 (26 HD)

Immune cold, magical blindness

Resist fire 10, sonic 10; **SR** 21

Fort +21, **Ref** +14, **Will** +32

Spd 30 ft., fly 80 ft. (good)

Melee 2 claws +28 (1d4+6)

Ranged +2 *adamantine distance seeking chakram* +24 (1d4+8/×3, range increment 60 ft.)

Base Atk +22; **Grp** +28

Atk Options rend 2d4+12, Shar's caress

Special Actions rebuke undead 7/day (+4, 2d6+10, 6th level), shriek, *true lies*

Combat Gear *empower metamagic rod, potion of bear's endurance, potion of cure serious wounds,* scroll of *air walk,* scroll of *cure serious wounds,* scroll of *neutralize poison,* scroll of *water breathing,* scroll of *heal*

Spells Prepared (CL 18th, +28 touch, +22 ranged touch)

7th—*blasphemy*[D], *destruction* (DC 29), *greater scrying* (DC 26), *mass cure serious wounds*

6th—*antilife shell, harm* (DC 28), *heal, prying eyes*[D], *word of recall*

5th—*break enchantment, darkbolt*[D] (DC 24, CL 17th), *mass cure light wounds, slay living* (DC 27), *soul scour* (DC 27), *wall of stone*

4th—*armor of darkness*[D], *cure critical wounds, death ward, dismissal, freedom of movement, spell immunity, tongues*

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 25), *create food and water, cure serious wounds, dispel magic* (2), *magic circle against good*[D], *prayer*

2nd—*blindness/deafness*[D] (DC 24), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *detect thoughts* (DC 21), *desecrate* (already cast), *hold person* (DC 22), *silence* (DC 22), *status*

1st—*command* (DC 21), *cure light wounds* (3), *deathwatch, entropic shield, obscuring mist*[D], *remove fear, sanctuary* (DC 20)

0—*cure minor wounds* (3), *detect magic, guidance, resistance*

D domain spell; **Domains** Darkness, Evil

Shrieking Hag Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

At will—*alter self, dancing lights, ghost sound* (DC 14), *gust of wind, shocking grasp, wind wall*

3/day—*charm person* (DC 15), *control winds, greater invisibility, lightning bolt* (DC 17), *see invisibility, suggestion* (DC 17)

1/day—*charm monster* (DC 18), *great shout* (DC 22), *polymorph, whirlwind* (DC 22)

1/tenday—*control weather*

Hag Covey Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)

3/day—*animate dead, bestow curse* (DC 17), *control weather, dream, forcecage, mind blank, mirage arcana* (DC 18), *polymorph, veil* (DC 19), *vision.*

Abilities Str 23, Dex 11, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 28, Cha 19

SQ darkness spells, disk of night, eyes of Shar, mind of Shar, spontaneous casting (inflict spells)

Feats Blind-Fight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (chakram), Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Insidious Magic, Iron Will, Pernicious Magic, Point Blank Shot, Practiced Spellcaster, Shadow Weave Magic, Spell Focus (necromancy), Tenacious Magic

Skills Bluff +23, Concentration +18, Hide +15, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (religion) +8, Listen +20, Move Silently +2, Perform (keyboard) +8, Spellcraft +16, Spot +16

Possessions combat gear, *+4 fire resistant shadow studded leather armor, +1 adamantine seeking returning chakram, ring of protection +4, amulet of natural armor +2, periapt of Wisdom +6, cloak of Charisma +4, hag eye,* 63 pp

Darkness Spells Stavrala can prepare Darkness domain spells as if they were on her cleric list.

Disk of Night (Su) Any chakram Stavrala uses is treated as a *+2 returning chakram.* It loses this ability if it is out of her hand for more than 1 round. Any additional abilities possessed by the chakram are retained.

Eyes of Shar (Ex) Stavrala's eyes are totally black. She has darkvision out to 60 feet and can see through magical darkness to a range of 10 feet in the same black-and-white sight that darkvision provides.

Hag Covey Spell-like Abilites (Sp) To use these spell-like abilities, Stavrala must be within 10 feet of both Tamilla and Vasyl, and all three must participate. Hag covey spell-like abilities require a full-round action to use.

Mind of Shar (Ex) Stavrala adds her Intelligence bonus to all saving throws.

Shadow Talk (Su) As a free action, Stavrala can communicate mystically through the shadows to any other worshiper of Shar or undead in service to Shar within 500 feet. Others can attempt a DC 15 Listen check to hear Stavrala's whispers if within 10 feet of her.

Shar's Caress (Su) As a free action, Stavrala can imbue a held chakram, whip, or dagger with the *unholy* property. This ability lasts for 1 round each time it is used and can be invoked twice per tenday. It

must be activated before attack rolls are made.

Shriek (Su) Three times a day Stavrala can give voice to a terrible, maddening shriek. Any creature within 60 feet of the hag takes 2d6 points of sonic damage and is also *confused* for 2d6 rounds. A DC 20 Fortitude save negates the *confusion* effect and halves the damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

***True Lies* (Sp)** Stavrala can reach into a creature's mind and instantly modify its memories as a 14th-level bard casting *modify memory*. She can use this ability four times per tenday.

Misango, barbed devil: hp 126; *Monster Manual* 51.

Hagspawn Berserkers (4): hp 75 each; see page 73.

Mindaugus, hagspawn captain: hp 102; see page 73.

Tactics: Mindaugus and the berserkers use similar tactics to their kin in area 1. Misango first uses *major image* to create an illusion of reinforcements coming to the battle from outside, followed by an *unholy blight* to smite enemies engaged with the hagspawn.

If Misango hears the sound of combat in the main room, he teleports to a series of prearranged meeting sites to pass the word to Stavrala via telepathy that their lair has been compromised. It takes him 1d20 rounds to contact Stavrala, at which point she uses *word of recall* to bring them both to area 6 of the Naerindyl estate ruins. From there, it takes her about a minute to reach this area, where she and Misango begin searching for the PCs.

If Stavrala is present (or if she arrives to find the PCs fighting some of the hagspawn), she uses shadow talk to contact all of her minions in this area, ordering them to converge on the PCs' location immediately. She prefers to remain out of combat, taking the time to cast defensive spells (starting with *antilife shell* and *greater invisibility*). Once she feels confident in her defenses, she blasts enemies with her maddening shriek and her spells. If her spells seem to be lacking in effect, she uses her chakram to attack at a distance. Those able to penetrate her *antilife shell* are attacked with a *soul scour* or *harm* spell.

If Stavrala is killed, Misango's work is done. He *greater teleports* to the root cellar below area 5b to collect his payment before departing for Hell.

Treasure: Each of the hagspawn berserkers keeps 200 gp stashed in a small, locked chest (DC 30 Open Lock) near their bed, along with various personal effects. Turova's chest also contains 35 pp. Mindaugus has a similar trunk that contains 60 pp, 100 gp, and one red tear gem worth 1,500 gp.

Stavrala's chambers in the larder are decorated with the grisly remains of many victims, human and otherwise, their bones carved and sculpted into grotesque statuary and knick-knacks. On a nightstand made of carved bone, Stavrala has laid out a collection of her favorite gemstones, including a jet worth 130 gp, four ravenars worth 1,000 gp each, two aquamarines worth 600 gp each, and a canary yellow diamond worth 6,000 gp.

A DC 30 Search of the root cellar below the larder uncovers a large sack made of human skin and filled with 6,000 gp for Misango's payment as her *planar ally*.

6. Wagon House

This rough wooden building has large doors hanging on bent hinges. The broken wagon wheels and harness speak to its former use as a storage shed for wagons.

7. Farrier's Shed

The harnessing stalls, pegs for hanging tools, and few scattered nails and horseshoes left in the detritus here indicate its former use as a place where horses and their gear were tended. A huge mound of bones lies against the eastern wall.

The hags use this area to dispose of the remnants of victims and creatures they've eaten. There is nothing of value in here.

8. Corral

This fenced open area was once a pen for horses or other livestock. The ettin dire werebats in area 9 keep a fairly sharp eye on this area, and if they see anyone attempting to infiltrate the complex

Stavrala's Feats and Spells

A few of Stavrala's spells are from non-core books. If you aren't using the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, *Unapproachable East*, or the *Spell Compendium* to run this adventure, replace *armor of darkness* with *unholy blight* (but remember that none of Stavrala's Shadow Weave feats can enhance this evocation spell), *soul scour* with *greater command*, and *darkbolt* with *dispel good*.

The game effects of Stavrala's non-core feats are as follows; for more information, consult the indicated sourcebook. PGtF indicates the *Player's Guide to Faerûn*, and CD indictates *Complete Divine*. Several of these feats target "Weave users;" a Weave user is any creature that employs spells or spell-like abilities without possessing the Shadow Weave Magic feat.

Insidious Magic (PGtF 40) Any Weave user who employes a divination effect to detect or reveal one of Stavrala's cleric spells must make a DC 29 caster level check to succeed. This benefit does not extend to spells Stavrala casts from the schools of evocation or transmutation.

Pernicious Magic (PGtF 42) Stavrala gains a +4 bonus on caster level checks to defeat a Weave user's SR with all spells save for those from the schools of evocation or transmutation.

Practiced Spellcaster (CD 82) Stavrala's caster level for cleric spells increases by +4 (this increase cannot increase her caster level beyond her Hit Dice).

Shadow Weave Magic (PGtF 43) Stavrala's spells tap the Shadow Weave instead of the Weave. The saving throw for every spell she casts from the schools of enchantment, illusion, and necromancy increases by +1, and she gains a +1 bonus on caster level checks to overcome SR with spells from these schools. Her effective caster level for evocation and transmutation spells is reduced by one, and she can no longer cast spells with the light descriptor.

Tenacious Magic (PGtF 45) Stavrala's spells resist dispelling attempts made by Weave users. When a Weave user makes a dispel check to dispel one of her spells, the DC is 33. This benefit does not extend to spells she casts from the schools of evocation or transmutation.

from this direction they raise the alarm and attack.

9. Barn (EL 14)

The roof of this cavernous structure has partially collapsed, as has the northwest corner of the building, though it seems otherwise mostly intact. The lower level doors of the barn stand open. The roof collapse appears to have also ruined part of the loft above. Loft doors fifteen feet up, directly above the main doors, are closed.

Creatures: This large structure is the home of Sina and Mesrak, ettin dire werebats recruited by Stavrala to assist in her plot. They spend most of their time in the northeast corner of the barn, sleeping in dire bat form in the loft.

Though the subtleties of the hags' machinations are lost on them, the two brutes have greatly enjoyed terrorizing the citizenry of Agmoth. Because of their empathic connection to bat-kind, they have attracted several colonies of bats to live with them in the barn.

Ettin Dire Werebat

Sina and Mesrak (Hybrid Form) CR 12
Male ettin dire werebat rogue 2
NE Large giant (shapechanger)
Monster Manual 175
Init +12; **Senses** blindsense 40 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +18, Spot +17
Languages Giant

AC 28, touch 20, flat-footed 20
hp 182 (16 HD); **DR** 10/silver
Fort +20, **Ref** +20, **Will** +13; evasion

Spd 40 ft.
Melee* 2 +2 *bastard swords* +18/+13/+8 (2d6+18/17–20) and
2 bites +11 (1d8+10 plus curse of lycanthropy)
Ranged 2 mwk javelin +19 (1d8+11)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +11; **Grp** +26
Atk Options Power Attack, sneak attack +1d6
*5-point Power Attack

Abilities Str 32, Dex 26, Con 24, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 8
SQ alternate form, lycanthropic empathy (bats), superior two-weapon fighting, trapfinding
Feats Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Stealthy
Skills Hide +13, Listen +18, Move Silently +17, Search +0, Spot +17
Possessions two +2 *bastard swords*, 4 masterwork javelins, *cloak of resistance* +2, *ring of protection* +2

Dire Bat Form In dire bat form the wearbats' statistics change as follows:
AC 26, touch 20, flat-footed 18
Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)
Melee* 2 bites +16 (1d8+21 plus curse of lycanthropy)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
*5-point Power Attack
Possessions *ring of protection* +2

Bat Swarms (6): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 237.

Tactics: Sina and Mesrak direct the bat swarms to surround them in melee (their damage reduction prevents the bats from harming them and their empathy prevents their becoming distracted). Sina and Mesrak are not bright, but they fight well as a team, working to grant each other flanking bonuses for sneak attacks when possible.

Sina and Mesrak are important to Stavrala's plans, and if she is present she orders the two ettins to avoid contact with the PCs and instead to flee the area and rendezvous at Moranay at the appointed time for the mob assault on Samulbrar Manor.

Chapter Three: Burn it Down!

Unless the party intervenes, the hags and their minions (the hagspawn as well as the dominated and charmed townsfolk) rouse a huge torch-wielding mob on the morning of 1 Uktar. The mobs form from most of the adult citizenry of Moranay and the outlying farms and begin their march at sunrise, arriving at Samulbrar Manor ten minutes later.

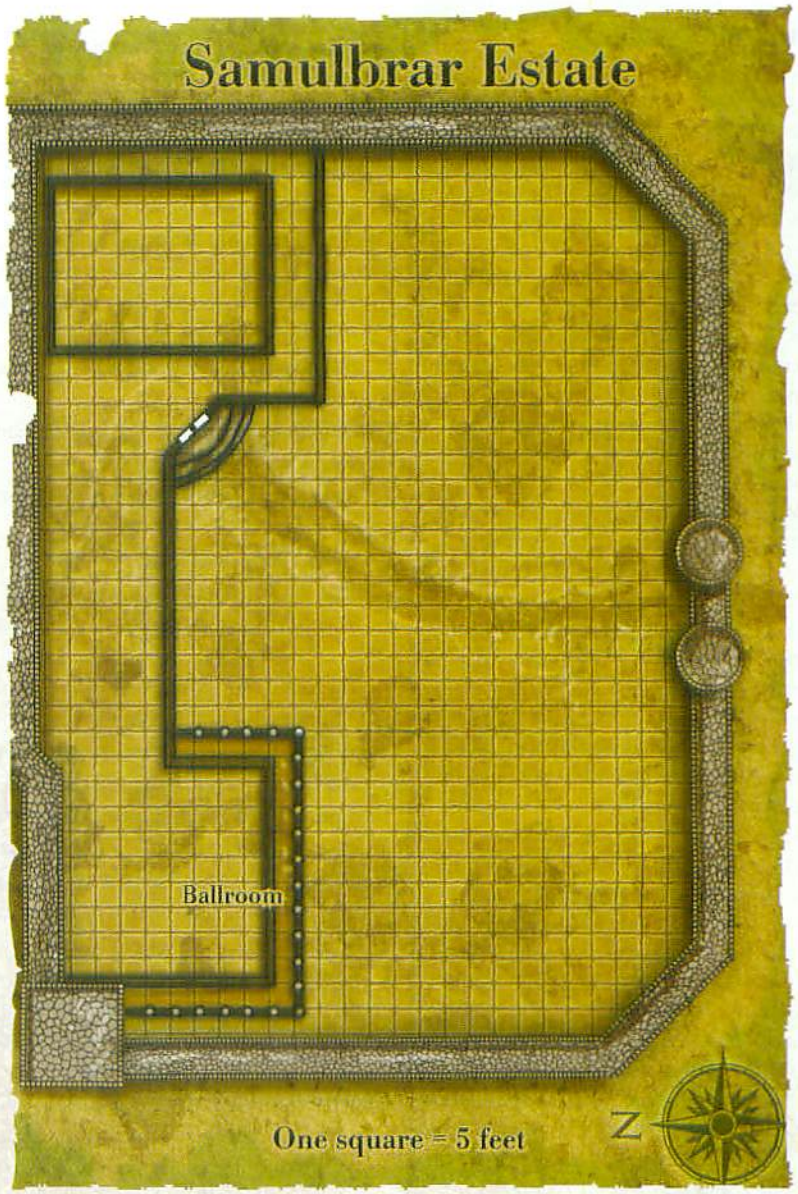
Before dawn, the hags use their covey powers to *control weather* to create thick cloud cover and a slowly advancing thunderstorm that blots out the sun, adding a light fog rolling across the ground. The

mist is not sufficient to provide concealment at close range but it does add to the ominous feel of the morning and further sets the mob on edge.

When the mob advances on the manor, Tamilla and Stavrala remain unobtrusive in their disguises of torch-wielding villagers, shouting encouragement to the mobs even as they keep a watch out for anyone trying to run ahead to alert the manor or attempting to mollify the mob. Stavrala creates a network of *prying eyes* to cover the manor and the immediate area to make sure she is not surprised by anyone arriving or leaving without her knowledge.

As the mob reaches the estate, Vasyl (who has disguised herself as Teda Hervyn, leaving the dominated royal constable in her home) takes a position at the head of the crowd. She declares that she has orders from the crown that Lord Samulbrar must be deposed and that the citizenry has been empowered to remove him by force. The mob immediately surges against the castle gates and walls, trying to tear a way through to burn and loot all that they find. As the crowd strikes, Stavrala uses shadow talk to direct Sina and Mesrak. Not long after the mob begins to assault the manor, the two swoop up onto the walls surrounding the manor, directing their bat colonies to circle the skies above. The two-headed werebats roost upon the parapet, shrieking their defiance to the crowd before swooping down to savage the mobs of townsfolk as they lay siege to the manor. If they are reduced to fewer than 20 hp, Sina and Mesrak will flee to the Naerindyl manor to avoid being unmasked, as instructed by the hags.

The hags then sit back and watch the fun, keeping an eye out to make sure Samulbrar and Danik do not try to escape and moving to attack any PCs who try to interfere. If the PCs have brought Danik with them, they direct attacks at him to try to ensure he does not survive.



Creatures: The townsfolk have organized into a total of ten torch-wielding mobs. Their primary goal in the encounter is to destroy Samial Manor. Rather than roll damage for the mob against each and every section of the manor, you can instead assume that it only takes the mobs a minute to do enough damage to the manor that it finally catches fire; at this point, only magic can save the manor from burning to the ground. Each mob that is destroyed adds 1 round to the minute required to set the building ablaze. The PCs should try to stop the mob with non-lethal measures, but using lethal force may be the only option if things grow desperate.

Torch-Wielding Mobs (10) **CR 9**

N Gargantuan humanoid (mob of Medium humans)

Dungeon Master's Guide II 60

Init +4; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4

Languages Common

AC 6, touch 6, flat-footed 6

hp 135 (30 HD)

Immune mob traits

Fort +11, **Ref** +9, **Will** +17

Spd 20 ft.

Melee mob (5d6 plus 1d6 fire)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +22; **Grp** +34

Atk Options burning rage, expert grappler, trample 2d6 plus 1d6 fire (DC 25)

Abilities Str 11, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ mob anatomy

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun

Skills Listen +4, Spot +4

Angry Mobs

Several of the creatures in this adventure use the mob template from *Dungeon Master's Guide II*. A mob is treated as a single entity similar to a swarm, except that it is made of larger creatures. A mob can be composed of Small, Medium, or Large creatures, but all the individual creatures must be of the same type. All mobs share the following characteristics.

Expert Grappler (Ex) A mob can maintain a grapple without penalty and still make attacks against other targets normally. A mob is never considered flat-footed while grappling.

Mob Anatomy (Ex) A mob is not subject to critical hits or sneak attacks. It cannot be flanked, tripped, grappled, or bull rushed. Each specific creature that is slain, disabled, or otherwise incapacitated by spells or effects that target specific creatures bestows two negative levels on the mob. A mob that gains 30 negative levels breaks up as if reduced to 0 hit points. Negative levels gained in this manner are not the result of negative energy (and thus cannot be blocked by death ward or removed by restoration), and never result in permanent level loss. A mob takes half again as much damage (+50%) from spells or effects that affect an area. A mob can occupy the same space as a creature. It can move through squares occupied by enemies and vice versa, although a mob provokes attacks of opportunity if it does so. A mob can move through openings large enough for its component creatures.

Mob Traits (Ex) A mob reduced to 0 hit points breaks up, although damage taken until this point does not degrade its ability to attack. A mob is never staggered or reduced to a dying state by damage. Mobs don't make standard attacks. Instead, they deal 5d6 points of bludgeoning damage to any creature whose space they occupy at the end of their move, with no attack roll needed. Mob attacks ignore concealment and cover. Damage reduction applies to mob attacks. A mob that simply moves over a creature and doesn't end its movement with that creature in one of its occupied squares can trample the creature. A trampled creature takes 2d6 damage and can either make an attack of opportunity against the mob or can make a DC 25 Reflex save to take half damage.

Burning Rage (Ex) A torch-wielding mob inflicts 1d6 points of fire damage in addition to its normal mob damage (or trample damage). Creatures within 5 feet (except for other torch-wielding mobs) must also make a DC 25 Reflex save or suffer 1d6 fire damage. Flammable unattended objects and structures within 5 feet of the mob's path must make a DC 25 Reflex save or catch on fire.

Hagspawn Berserkers (12): hp 75 each; see page 73.

Hagspawn Captains (3): hp 102 each; see page 73.

Ettin Dire Werebats (2): hp 182 each; see page 78.

Vasyl Yauheni: hp 141; see page 74.

Tamilla Murck: hp 134; see page 73.

Stavrala Nazaerlyth: hp 221; see page 76.

Tactics: The torch-wielding mobs are generally not open to reason or negotiation, having been driven into a frenzy by the weeks of mental corruption and poisonous rumormongering by the hags and their minions. Their primary goals are to smash their way into the manor and burn or destroy everything they find.

The challenge facing the party is to disperse the crowds of townsfolk with as little loss of life as possible. At the same time, they must deal with the hags and their minions, who interfere with any efforts to disperse the mobs. Certain tactics that could have excellent effects on controlling the mobs include the following.

- A DC 35 Diplomacy check or a DC 40 Intimidate check sways some of the cooler heads within a single mob, inflicting 2d4 negative levels. This Diplomacy check must be made as a full-round action, suffering a –10 penalty.
- A *dispel magic* (DC 31 caster level check) spell can neutralize many of the *charm*, *dominate*, and *modify memory* enchantments placed by the hags, inflicting 2d10 negative levels on one mob.
- A *calm emotions* spell pacifies all mobs within the area of effect that fail their save. Hags who notice such a spell with a Spellcraft check immediately direct attacks against the caster to disrupt his concentration.
- An *enthrall* spell could potentially neutralize most of the battlefield, but once the mob begins their actual assault it takes a DC 30 Diplomacy or Intimidate check to get their attention in order to cast the spell. Any hag that notices this attempt tries to interrupt the casting. Even if the spell succeeds, the nearest hag immediately leads unaffected creatures in jeering and heckling, making a collective Charisma check to break the spell using the hag's Charisma bonus with a bonus of +2 for every cooperating creature that is unaffected and succeeds at a DC 10 Charisma check. They may also direct their minions to attack the crowd of "traitors," breaking the spell.
- Protecting the village mobs from the ettin dire werebats gains the party favor in the sight of the villagers, inflicting 1d4 negative levels to any mob within 30 feet when a werebat is defeated.
- Proof of hag impersonation raises enough questions in the minds of onlookers to inflict 1d10 negative levels to every mob. This benefit can be gained once by presenting past evidence of the hags' involvement.

An obvious tactic for the PCs would be to rally Lord Samulbrar and Danik Grycos to their aid in the battle. If Danik has been rescued by the PCs, he can take part in the battle. Lord Samulbrar, however, does not. The arrival of the mob outside his home drives his despair home like a knife to the heart. He retreats to his bedchamber to write and seal a note naming Danik his legal successor, pours himself a glass of wine, and just before the flames of the fire reach him, he uses *Nightwatcher* to destroy the *Arywen Cube*, severing his connection to the elven spirits of the Gray Forest. Seconds later, he falls upon his sword, killing himself. Only by stopping the mob and defeating the hags before the manor catches fire can the PCs prevent this terrible fate.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Do not award XP for mobs the PCs defeat with lethal means. Award a CR 10 experience

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BY JASON NELSON-BROWN

award for each mob that is defeated by nonleathal means.

Concluding the Adventure

If Lord Samulbrar ends up dead by his own hand, the hags have succeeded in their goal even if the PCs finally manage to kill them all. In this case, Samulbrar refuses to be brought back from the dead if any attempt is made to raise him. Falder will also be found dead inside the castle, having taken poison at the command of the hags.

Hopefully, things do not progress to this bleak end. If the PCs can defeat the hags and their minions and stop the angry mob before they manage to set fire to the manor, the villagers retreat to Moranay, wracked with guilt and confusion over what has occurred.

The situation in town does not immediately revert to bliss and joy. The *charms* and *dominate* effects fade soon enough, but the *modify memory* spells persist until they are removed with *dispel magic*, *break enchantment*, or similar magic. If the PCs wish to work to erase the township's false memories, they find it a difficult and tedious task. With Danik's assistance and that of the newly un-dominated Teda Hervyn, the PCs can clean up the mental mess left by the hags with 1d4 weeks of work. If the PCs do so, award them an additional experience award as if they had defeated a CR 12 creature.

Samulbrar, Danik, Teda, and Gracelyn all write reports to the royal heralds describing how the party did. The monetary rewards the government grants the PCs depends a great deal on how well the party pacified the situation. If they were able to disperse the uprising, save Samulbrar, and unravel the corruption in the county without having to resort to lethal force, the PCs receive a royal endowment of 20,000 gp apiece. If lives were lost, this reward is reduced by 1,000 per mob lost (or by 10,000 if Samulbrar died).

For his part, Lord Samulbrar holds a feast at his manor in the party's honor, during which he offers them his favorite blade as a reward, the sword *Nightwatcher*. The black blade just holds too many memories and pain for him to want to keep it around. The next day, Lord Samulbrar, with Danik at his side, gives a public address to the town offering his apologies for allowing this all to happen, and announces that he is passing his land holdings to his ward, Danik. He'll continue to live his life, providing aid and advice to the new line of landowners as necessary, but he's also come to learn that a leader must not only serve his people, but that he must be one with them. A Man Forever is more than human, and such supernatural lives should not seek to meddle in human affairs.

Jason Nelson-Brown lives in Seattle with his wife Kelle, daughters Meshia and Indigo, and son Allen. He is an active and committed born-again Christian who began playing D&D in 1981 and currently runs one weekly campaign while playing intermittently in two others. He writes several webcolumns for wizards.com and still finds time to contribute occasionally to DRAGON *and* DUNGEON *in and around trying to finish his doctoral dissertation in education.*

New Weapon Quality

Berserker: When the wielder is raging, a berserker weapon's enhancement bonus increases by +2.

Faint evocation; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *divine power* or *rage*; Market Price: +1 bonus.

Nightwatcher

This +3 *adamantine longsword* is a relic of ancient Netheril. Its blade is black and its pommel is silver, worked in ivory and set with a large black pearl. *Nightwatcher's* bearer gains low-light vision, and the blade disperses magical darkness within 30 feet if it succeeds on a caster level check (as if casting *dispel magic*). When planted firmly into the ground, Nightwatcher hums loudly if an enemy approaches within 60 feet. This item is from the *Player's Guide to Faerûn*.

Moderate evocation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *alarm*, *dispel magic*, *light*; Price 89,315 gp; Cost 44,815 gp + 3,560 XP.

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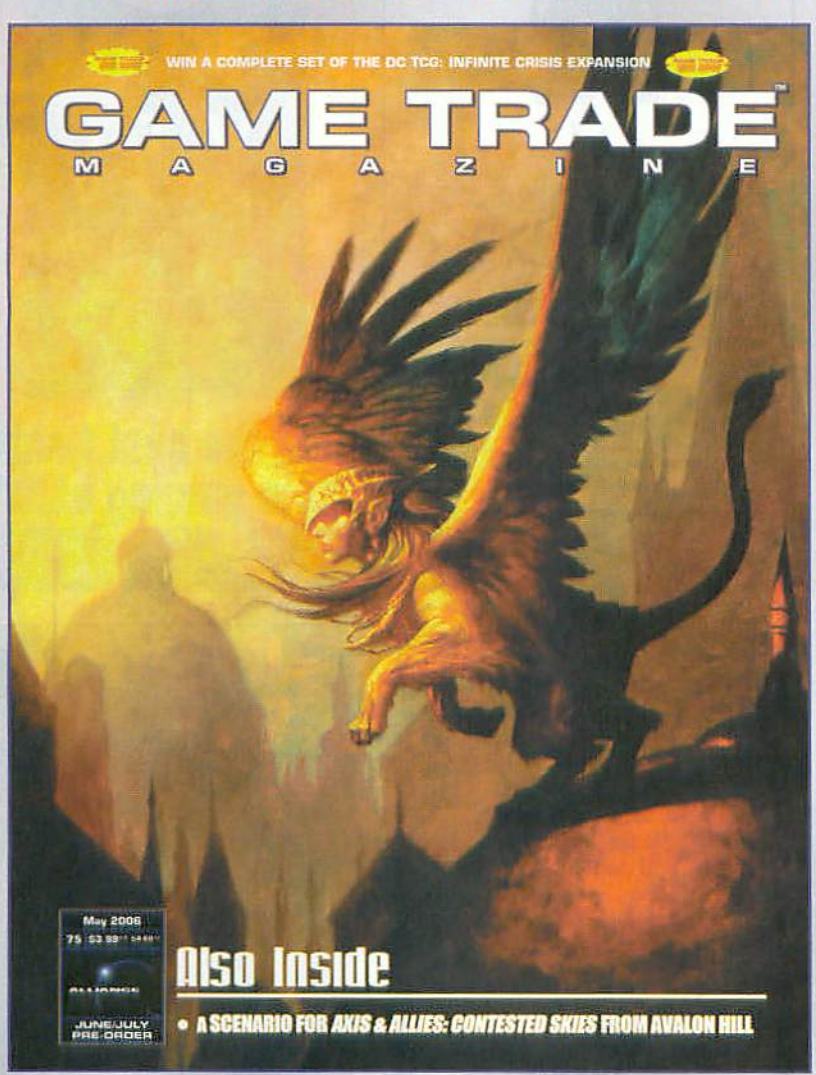
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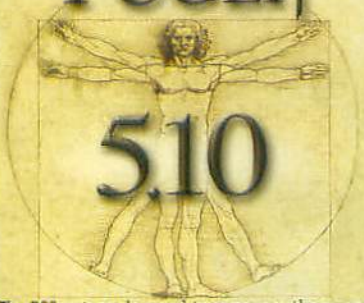

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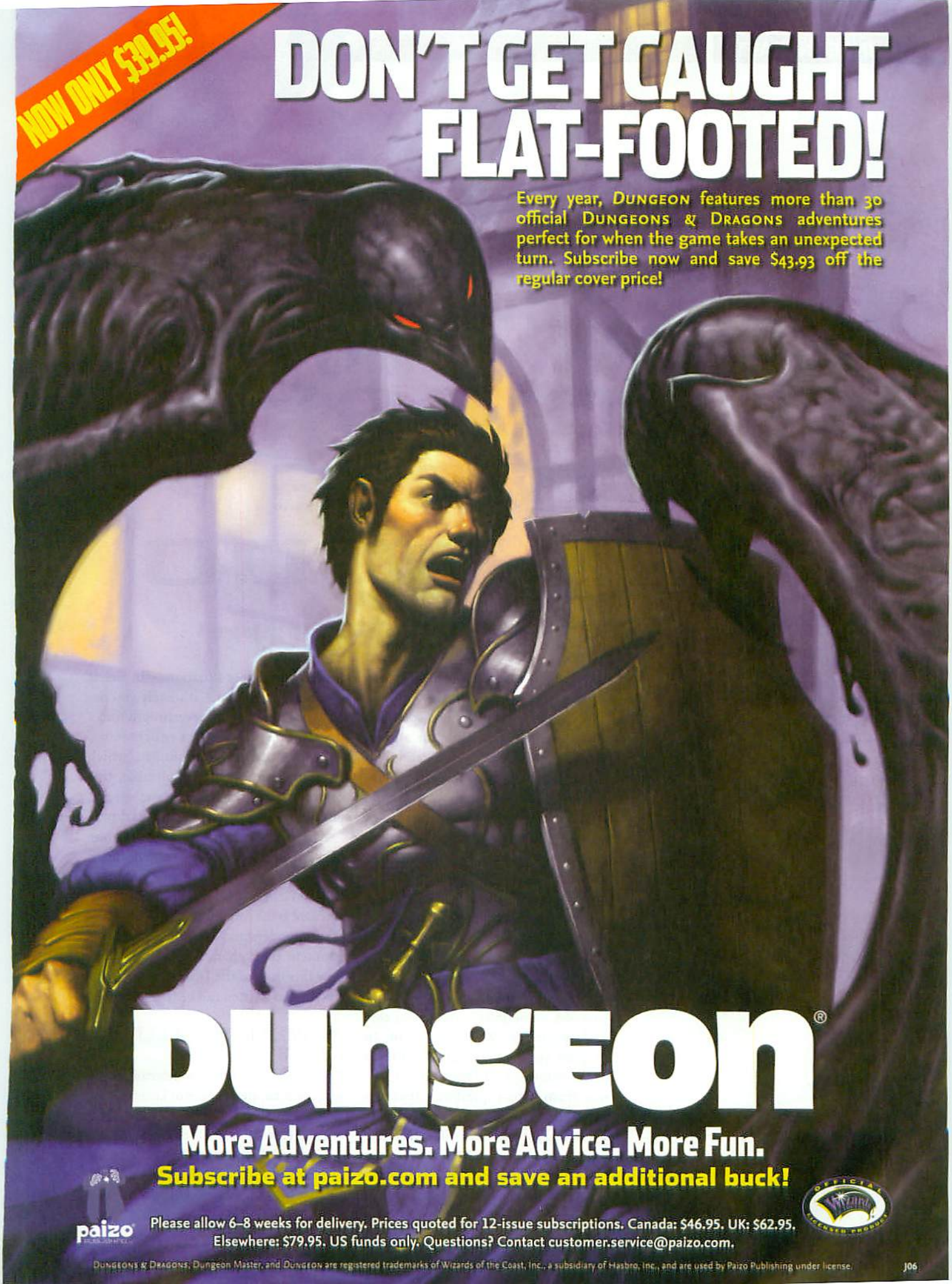
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J06

RUNNING A GAME IS HARD TO DO

PART 1: CHARACTERS AND PERCEPTION

BY MONTE COOK
BY KYLE HUNTER

The books tell you how to make an attack roll, determine a possible target of a spell, and calculate experience awards for a given encounter. They even give guidelines on appropriate amounts of treasure to give out and suggestions on how to design a setting. But in many ways, the skill of DMing is still one gained through experience and by watching others do it. There's a trick to pulling it all together. The difficulty comes not in understanding the rules, but in actually applying them.

There's a difference between reading a rule and using a rule, although those differences don't always become apparent until you are in the middle of a game. Worse yet, sometimes a rule, even correctly applied, doesn't "feel" right. In this short series of columns, I'd like to discuss some specific examples. These come from actual questions that I've received over the years from real gamers playing real games. (In particular, I'd like to thank Christopher Marsh for some of the inspiration for these columns.) You may have your own "house rules" for handling these situations—in fact, if you run a D&D game, it's likely you do. New DMs and old, however, might find a discussion of these topics enlightening.

Unlike my previous columns, which have been universally applicable, this one and the next couple focus on specific examples from DUNGEONS & DRAGONS.

I'd like to start this series with some ideas about how the players actually learn what's going on around them. I know that "the DM tells them," is the obvious answer. The DM is the conduit through which the players understand the immediate environment their characters inhabit. Still, how this duty of the DM intersects with the rules as written can be tricky.

ASKING FOR SPOT AND LISTEN CHECKS

The rules govern how one determines the success or failure of a Spot or Listen check. But when does a character make these checks? How often are they required?

First and foremost, you need to decide where the line of obvious perception lies. By that I mean, what sounds do the PCs

need to make a check to hear, and what sounds do they just hear? Likewise, what sights do they need to make a Spot or Search check to see, and what's just part of your visual description of a scene? DM judgment is needed here, but in general, if the DC for seeing or hearing something would be less than 10, don't bother asking for a check. PCs don't need to make a check to notice the chest against the far wall, or to hear the babbling brook in the nearby glen. The goal should be to only ask for checks when it's really important.

It also depends on circumstances. If the PCs move quickly down a hall, you might call for Spot checks to notice that there's a trail of blood on the floor. However, if they're moving down the hall slowly, no checks are needed. Likewise, something that would be obvious on the ground might not be as obvious on the ceiling (people tend not to look up as often as they look down). Lighting can also play a factor. A message scrawled on the ceiling or on a wall in dim light might require a Spot check to notice, but on the floor or wall in a brightly light room, no check is needed. (In any of these examples, if a player states that their character is actually searching the area in question, it's likely no check is needed to find the message—see "Spot Versus Search," below.)

Listen or Spot checks can get repetitive and dull if players have to make them over and over, especially when it usually only takes one success out of the whole group to succeed, making their success typically a foregone conclusion. Think twice before asking for such checks. They're interesting when the PCs are trying to find a hiding or invisible foe, but get dull fast when they're walking through the woods and you ask for them for every hour of travel. Conversely, you don't want to give away every sight and sound without checks, because doing so penalizes the characters that spent skill points in those skills.

One thing you certainly don't want to do is make the players make both Spot and Listen checks when only one is necessary. This leads to even more superfluous dice rolling and a waste of game time. Choose one that seems appropriate. If it comes down to it, Spot trumps Listen because we're visual creatures when push comes to shove. In other words, use Listen only when there really is nothing to see.

Don't be afraid, in some cases, to only allow one or two characters to make the check. It's within your prerogative to rule that most of the party is preoccupied in other activities while one character is more or less "keeping watch." This isn't covered in the rules, but in a case-by-case basis, you can decide that only a character who's trying to listen or keep an eye out has a chance of making a check.

Also, because relevant DCs are usually low enough that, unless they're opposing a hiding or silent rogue, someone in the group is likely to make the check every time, Spot and Listen checks are usually successful. Don't allow that to lull you into thinking that you can base an adventure on their success or failure, however. It's not as crazy as it sounds. Plenty of DMs might have the "hook" for an adventure be the PCs hearing screams in the night, but if you hinge this on Listen checks, keep in mind that the PCs might all roll terribly. Suddenly, poof! No adventure. In cases like these, it's best to not even bother with the checks.

If handled right—meaning employed sparingly—you can even use Spot or Listen checks to unnerve the players. Ask for a Spot check and, no matter what the results of the rolls are, don't tell them anything. They'll begin to think there's something that they've missed!

CHARACTER SUCCESS VERSUS GROUP SUCCESS

It is often the case that when Spot and Listen checks are required, they get made by everyone in the group, and some PCs are successful while others are not. In such a case, should a DM announce what the successful characters hear to everyone? I think the answer is almost always "yes." The only exception would be if the character(s) that are successful have no chance of communicating with the others without some repercussion (such as revealing their position while hiding) or when it's not possible at all, perhaps due to time constraints. Talking is an action most DMs allow outside of one's turn, however, so it's usually not an issue—or perhaps these circumstances happen outside of initiative, where actions and turns are irrelevant.

The danger of handling of Listen and Spot this way is that it makes it obvious after a time that only one person in the group really needs to be good at the skill. This isn't the end of the world, but it can lead to real meta-game thinking. It can sometimes be useful to have two different successful characters see or hear different things: "Mara, you see something moving in the shadows in the corner, and at the same time, Shurrin, you spot what appears to be a large spider's web covering the ceiling." Now the group is happy they've got two good spotters.

Very occasionally, it can be fun to take the successful character(s) aside and tell them in secret what they see or hear that the others do not, then let them describe it to the others. This is particularly appropriate in cases where you are trying to create some suspense or tension, or if the sight or sound is particularly startling and important.

SPOT VERSUS SEARCH

Listen checks are usually obvious in their use, and rarely pose a problem. A player can initiate them ("I listen at the door") or the DM can initiate them ("make Listen checks for me"). But when do you make a Spot check versus a Search check? Although it doesn't follow the rules exactly as written, there is a general rule of thumb that allows you to be correct far more often than not. The rule of thumb is that a player initiates a Search check, while the DM initiates a Spot check. For example, if a player says he's going to have his character look for a secret door, he makes a Search check. But if the DM wants to determine if a PC notices the hiding darkmantle, he calls for a Spot check. The only time you'll go wrong is when a player initiates a Spot check by saying, "I look for the rogue, I know he's hiding around here somewhere..." That, however, is easy to remember because, unlike most other situations, it's an opposed roll.

Another sticky Spot versus Search issue is the ever-popular tripwire. While it's clear from the rules that you Search for traps, lots of times you want to give a PC a chance to see the tripwire he's about to trip, even if he's not actively looking for traps. That sounds a lot more like a Spot check than a Search check. Once again,

the rule of thumb comes in handy—the DM's initiating the check, not the player, so it's a Spot check.

Of course, Spot is used for more than just finding hiding rogues, pickpockets, or creeping monsters, or for determining if the PCs get to act in the surprise round. You might allow a Spot check to notice static things around the PCs that they might otherwise miss as they pass by: a dropped coin, a big scratch on the wall, a strangely burnt spot in the grass, and so on. However, remember that too many Spot checks gets dull. Don't call for the check unless something is important and would really remain unseen otherwise, or if you're trying to give a character with a good Spot check bonus something to do.

Some things might be noticed without trying on a successful Spot check, but are found automatically if a player actually searches. For example, a character just passing through a cave might not notice the old iron chest tucked behind the large stalagmite without making a check, but any character who simply says "I look behind the stalagmite" need make no roll.

The rule that elves can make Search checks for secret doors just by walking by seems to fly in the face of this advice. You can either assume that somehow elves are always subconsciously looking for secret doors for some reason, or you can make this a Spot check for elves instead. Additionally, you could decree that this rule really should apply to all such hidden things and not just doors, and that elves coming within 5 feet of something secret have a chance to Spot it. This would also suggest that elves walking by something you'd normally require a Spot check to see, like the bloodstain or the dropped coin, automatically see it as if they were searching.

SPOTTING IN A BATTLE

The rules allow a character to make a Spot check (to see hiding foes or anything else) as a move action. I also allow characters to make a "quick" Spot check, with a –5 penalty, as a free action during a round, although no more than once each round. This is just a quick look around to get one's bearings.

Spot is also useful for determining how much a PC is aware of "in the fog of war." Although I'll get into this in greater detail in an upcoming column, you might consider forcing a PC to make a Spot check in order to count squares to determine the exact range to a target or the exact placement of an area spell. You might also ask for a quick Spot check to reveal information regarding how well a PC's allies are faring as they engage in melee across the room while that PC fights with his own opponent. (If you're using miniatures on a grid, the player knows where his allies are and what foes they face, but he might not be clear on whether his friends are on the ropes or if they have things well in hand.)

SEARCHING THE ROOM

You tell the players, "You come into a room with a bed, a chest of drawers, a mirror, three chairs, and a wardrobe. There's a rug covering the floor, and torches in sconces on the walls." They want to search the room. How specific do you require them to be? Do they have to say, "I'm searching the chest" or "I'm looking under the rug," or can they just say, "We search the room?"

The answer should likely be that "we search the room" assumes they search everything—even the floor, walls, and ceiling. However, if the players want to be specific, let them. If someone says they just search the bed, then their Search check applies only to secret stuff relating to the bed (such as something hidden under it, something tucked beneath the mattress, or something carved into the bedpost). Remember that searching is a time issue. It likely takes one round to search the bed, but many minutes, at least, to use Search on even a small room and its contents entirely. The players might be time conscious and want to only search specific aspects of the room. Ultimately, DMs should allow both approaches, leaving the decision to the players.

If the PCs want to search the whole room, but are announcing what they search item by item, be generous in helping them keep the details straight. "OK, you've now searched everything in the room but the three chairs and the ceiling." Some players will think that you are doing this to lead them to a secret, so make sure that you don't.

But what if there are two secrets in the room? What if there's a secret cache behind the mirror and a secret message written on the back of one of the drawers in the chest? It's easy if the PCs make their Search checks item by item, but if they say, "We search the room," you should tell the searcher about the easier-to-find secret first, then ask, "Are you done here now, or do you want to search more?" Most players will opt for further searching, but if they don't—oh well.

If a player says, "My character looks for secret doors in the floor" and there are no doors, but there are lightly etched runes carved into one of the floor stones, does he see the runes if he makes the check, or is he too busy looking for secret doors to notice them? This one is easy. The answer is, yes, he finds them. Don't make a player tell you both where he's looking and what he's looking for—it penalizes the player for being specific. Tell him, "You don't find anything that looks like it's hiding a door. However, while you're looking for hidden seams and loose stones, you notice one stone has some strange markings on it. Would you like to look at them more closely?"

Does a character know when he's made a bad Search check? Can he say, "Someone else should check this thing, I don't think I did a good job" if he rolls a 3? Many DMs make Search checks for the players for just this reason. Ultimately, though, it's not entirely unrealistic to realize that you've done a poor job. If your players make their own Search checks, let them reroll if they wish.

Lastly, there's a bizarre attitude among some DMs that taking 20 on Search checks is somehow cheating. That's preposterous. Taking 20 is just there to speed things along, so you and the other players don't have to sit there while a PC checks and rechecks, waiting to roll really high. Ultimately, if you didn't want them to find the secret door, why'd you put it there to begin with? Secrets are fun, but only if they're found.

Monte Cook is the author of the Dungeon Master's Guide. *Check out his publishing company, Malhavoc Press, at montecook.com.*

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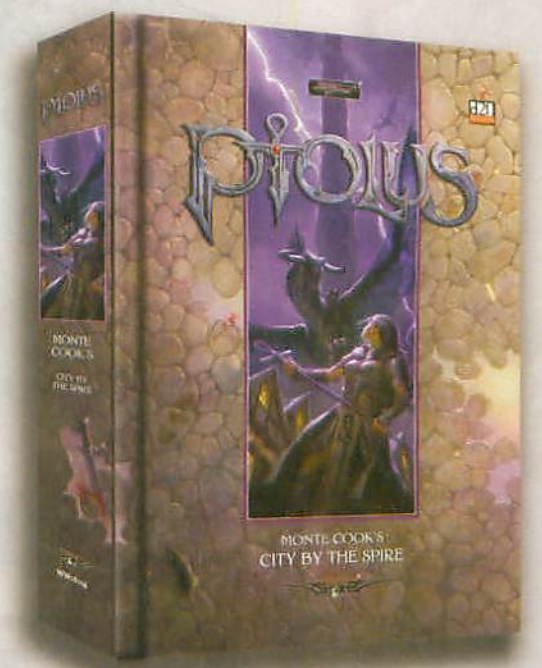

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GRISLY ENDS

BY HAL MACLEAN,
BY KYLE HUNTER,

Sprawled across the dungeon floor amid creeping insects and mold, nothing offers as somber a warning to heroes and villains alike as dead bodies left to rot in the depths. Perhaps the last member of a doomed expedition or a traitor abandoned to fester on unconsecrated ground, corpses hint at mysteries and beg further investigation. The bodies described below can act as launching

points for the imagination, as well as potential adventure hooks.

1. **Buried** The lower half of this weather-beaten man disappears into the floor, his legs and one of his hands submerged in stone as if wading through a tranquil stream. Only the pools of dried blood and the tortured expression frozen on his face hint at his frantic attempts to break free.

2. **Eviscerated** This once-beautiful woman, her golden hair splayed out like a sunset on the unyielding floor, offers up the gaping cavity of her torso as a mute counterpoint to the walls and ceiling painted with her innards. No organs or vital fluids survived this eruption from within, and only some dried viscera still cling to her rib cage and spine.

3. **Butchered** What was once a person with hopes and dreams can now only pass as scattered chunks of rotting meat. These irregular pieces offer no hint at what weapon or beast mangled the victim so thoroughly. It seems as if something simply broke the corpse into a hundred pieces, leaving a grisly jigsaw puzzle behind.

4. **Hung** A rough-hewn noose hangs from thin air, bits of spindly twine jutting from the coarse fiber as the body it holds sways faintly in the moist subterranean breeze, dangling like some fruit left too long on the branch. His once gleaming armor, now caked in dust and mold, proudly bears the sigil of Heironeous, as do the gauntlets bound to his chest by yet more clinging rope.

5. **Disarmed** The wrists of this noble-looking elf end in bloody stumps, as if someone had chopped both of his hands with a single blow. His eyes, goggling in unspeakable horror, hint at a ferocious struggle for life, as do the deep purple bruises around his neck. Tiny, fingerprint-sized tracks, inked in blood and dungeon dust, suggest that he may have been strangled by his own hands before they scampered off.

6. **Quarantined** Scarcely a mark mars the alabaster beauty of the woman lying crumpled upon the floor. A circle of dead insects and rats serves as her only funeral marker, arranged as if they had touched her flesh, taken a few steps, then dropped dead in their tracks.

7. **Drowned** Only the legs and hairy feet of this prosperous-looking halfling break the surface of a shallow subterranean pool. A rusted iron chain wrapped around his neck and fixed to a piece of shattered stone column holds the rest of his body just beneath the surface, drowned by merest inches.

8. **Impaled** High overhead amidst drooping stalactites dangles a man, pierced through the torso and left suspended in defiance of gravity.

9. **Embalmed** Resting upon an irregular plug of natural stone, this eviscerated elderly woman lies surrounded by dozens of small glass jars. In each neatly labeled jar, a single organ swims in a translucent, amber colored solution.

10. **Starved** This half-orc, tusks filed to points and bestial tattoos snaking their way across his arms, neck, and back, lies face down, his hands hammered into the stone by crudely forged iron nails. Scant inches beyond the reach of his emaciated body sit tightly sealed bottles of wine and jars of pickled food.

11. **Smashed** A dwarf lies on the floor, his body broken by a great fall. Bones shattered, beard matted with dried blood and the dull gray paste that was once his brain, the only mystery is how he arrived in this corridor with the ceiling barely ten feet above his corpse.

12. **Phased Out** In life, this burly man likely held sway in any tavern he entered. Now he gradually grows less and less substantial, fading away entirely every thirty seconds before suddenly reappearing again. Each time he returns, another mark—small, angular, and almost like the wound a pair of pliers might make—appears on his body.

13. **Deboned** This small pile of skin and muscles, surrounded by a pool of dried blood, has no bones, as if the skeleton simply tore itself free and abandoned what might have once been a gnome.

14. **Whipped** It seems as if a whip of fire has lashed the flesh of this drow, leaving great charred tracks in her flesh. Strangely, while her cloak, leather belt, and other organic pieces of equipment have the same slashing burn patterns, her armor, spider-shaped holy symbol, and other metallic gear are completely untouched.

15. **Transformed** Features of human and wolf war across this man's body. The lower part of his face is a cruelly narrow muzzle. Patches of gray fur cover parths of his body, and one hand has twisted into a claw. The other hand, still human, grips a silver dagger, its blade plunged deep into the body's heart.

16. **Stained** A puddle of foul-smelling ichor lies a few feet from the body of this woman. Her fingers are stained with alchemical compounds, and it seems as if someone has already picked over her remains. Her backpack is split apart and a metal case, perfectly sized to hold a book, has been crudely pried open. Strangely, no marks are visible upon her skin.

17. **Eaten** A hollow metal spike, almost like a grotesque drinking straw, juts from the temple of this half-elf. His delicate, refined features are twisted into a grimace of unspeakable terror.

18. **Smoked** This corpse reeks of smoke, yet there are no traces of burns on his skin or gear. So recently dead that the flecks of spittle on his chin have yet to dry, it almost seems as if something simply filled his lungs with smoke.

19. **Skinned** Chained to a thick stone pillar by his knees and elbows, someone has flayed nearly every inch of this man's skin from his body. Only one small patch of skin remains, just over his heart. This lonely piece of flesh bears an intricate tattoo of a wasp, so lifelike that it could almost leap right off the skin.

20. **Pierced** Dangling upside down, suspended from a rope fixed to a strange, spindly mushroom, it initially seems as if this dwarf ran afoul of some crude trap and starved to death. A closer inspection reveals hundreds of tiny arrows, each the size of tailor's needle, embedded in his face, neck, and upper arms—almost as if tiny archers caught him in their trap and used him for target practice.

FORAGING FINDS

BY RUSSELL BROWN
BY KYLE HUNTER

Do your PCs use Survival to stay safe and forage for food and water as they travel in the wilderness? If so, you can use the following tables to provide further details—each presents a sampling of the items and situations your PCs might discover with a successful Survival check in a particular environment, as well as a table of situations they might encounter on a badly failed Survival check. If your party is relatively high level, feel free to substitute tougher creatures, nastier poisons, and higher falls.

If your party doesn't use Survival, consider calculating the total cost and weight of rations and water for their next long wilderness journey (see Starvation and Thirst, *Dungeon Master's Guide* 304). Once they see how much they have to carry, they might change their minds.

WARM DESERT

Food and water are scarce in deserts and arid wastelands. The primary sources of water are wadis, rivers that only exist for a few days after it rains, and the rare oasis wells, which may be guarded by territorial creatures or poisoned by rival desert tribes.

Random Desert Finds (d8)

1 Water from an oasis pool, found by following small birds
2 Muddy soil from an empty wadi, squeezed through cloth to produce drinking water
3 Small lizards and lizard eggs
4 Fluid and pulp from inside a large cactus
5 Palm nuts, plus a freshly hollowed-out palm tree stump that continually fills with water from the roots
6 Beetles and grubs from around tree roots
7 Fruit from a prickly pear cactus
8 Small animal tracks leading to edible desert lilies with clean water just below the surface

Random Desert Failures (d3)

1 Poisoned oasis well (ingested DC 12, initial 1 Con, secondary 1d4 Con)
2 Disturb a centipede swarm (*Monster Manual* 238) near a hidden pool
3 Caught in a sandstorm (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 91)

TEMPERATE FOREST

Forests are usually well watered and packed with game animals and edible plants. Water can be easily found by following the slope of the land to the small, clean streams in the valleys. The main dangers of foraging in the forest are getting lost or eating something you shouldn't.

Random Forest Finds (d8)

1 Burdock root and rabbit caught in a snare trap
2 Venison and black truffles
3 Jack-in-the-pulpit bulbs, boiled or roasted
4 Squirrel meat and blackberries
5 Lilly buds and black birch (wintergreen) tea
6 Quail eggs with field garlic and nettles
7 Fish from a forest lake
8 Blackberries and spit-roasted boar

Random Forest Failures (d3)

1 Pursuing an elusive stag causes a chance for the foragers to get lost (see *Dungeon Master's Guide* 86).
2 Hemlock is mistaken for wild carrots. Treat as arsenic (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 297).
3 Diseased wild boar. Causes disease even after cooking (ingested, DC 16, incubation 1 day, damage 1d4 Con).

TEMPERATE HILLS

Finding water in rolling hills is as easy as walking downhill and following the small streams to the larger ones. The streams and lakes teem with life, both around the water and in it. Game is plentiful, and many edible plants can supplement the meat.

Random Hills Finds (d8)

1 Crabapples and songbirds
2 Wild apples and dandelions
3 Wild mushrooms and persimmons
4 Beaver and sweet grasses
5 Sparrow eggs and honey
6 Muskrat
7 Mashed hickory nuts and thin maple syrup
8 Fish from streams and rivers

Random Hills Failures (d3)

1 Mistake lily-of-the-valley for wild onions. Treat as arsenic (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 297).
2 Lead party into poison sumac. Treat as a disease, contact, DC 13, incubation 1 day, damage 1d3 Dex, DC 13 Fortitude save each day to avoid scratching and reduce damage to 1 Dex.
3 The forager steps on loose rubble while harvesting buzzard eggs. DC 15 Reflex save to avoid 20 ft. fall.

TEMPERATE MARSH

Plants and animals thrive in marshes and provide a variety of food sources. Water is everywhere, but may be stagnant and undrinkable unless boiled. Marsh terrain can be unreliable, dangerous, and disorienting, and the creatures that dwell within are often diseased or poisonous as well.

Random Marsh Finds (d8)

1 Large snakes and grape vines
2 Cabbage, palm hearts, and flowers
3 Mangos and boiled water
4 Roasted frogs and small fish
5 Crocodile meat and succulent reeds
6 Wild geese and berries
7 Crickets with legs and antennae removed
8 Water purified by dropping hot rocks into a shallow pool and trapping the steam in cloth.

Random Marsh Failures (d3)

1 Attacked by a constrictor snake (*Monster Manual* 279) while wading in waist-high water.
2 Lead the party into a patch of quicksand (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 88)
3 Foraged frog meat is a mild hallucinogenic (ingested DC 11, initial 1d4 Wis, secondary 1 Wis).

COLD MOUNTAINS

Cold, snow-covered mountains are inhospitable, but still home to many game animals. Edible plants are rare, but water is everywhere as long as fire is available to melt snow and ice.

Random Mountain Finds (d8)

1 White button mushrooms and wild carrots
2 Waterfall surrounded by wild blueberries
3 Mountain goat and water from an ice-covered stream
4 Rattlesnake meat and thistle shoots
5 Elk meat
6 Wild radish and rabbit stew
7 The inner bark of aspen trees
8 Salmon from a mountain stream

Random Mountain Failures (d3)

1 The forager is caught in an avalanche (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 90).
2 Any grazing animals in the party eat poisonous sheep laurel and become bloated and weak (ingested DC 17, initial 1d6 Str, secondary 2d6 Str).
3 Difficult path along a slippery ledge. The party must forfeit 1/2 day of travel or make DC 12 Balance checks to avoid falling 30 feet into a chasm.

TEMPERATE PLAINS

Temperate plains are home to roaming herds of herbivores and the stealthy predators that prey upon them. Water is plentiful, but tends to be concentrated in rivers and transient watering holes between the hills.

Random Plains Finds (d8)

1 Roasted black walnuts and water from an abandoned well
2 Raccoon caught in a pit trap and a colony of honey ants discovered while digging the pit
3 Groundhogs and rainwater
4 Watering hole and antelope with wild onion and asparagus
5 Young hyena meat and water from a spring
6 Giant fire beetle meat fried into cakes
7 Pheasant under grass
8 Hidden cache of dried and bottled foods left by mercenaries

Random Plains Failures (d3)

1 A pack of hyenas (*Monster Manual* 274) wants the antelope you just killed.
2 Watering hole is infested with malarial mosquitoes. Treat as filth fever (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 292).
3 The forager is separated from the party by a large bog and has a chance of becoming lost. See *Dungeon Master's Guide* 86.

THE DUSKLIGHT CARAVAN

Autumn breezes spin the first leaves off the trees, and the wind carries the sound of bells and carriage wheels into the city square. A caravan comes into view as the sun sets, gaily decorated with maple leaves and rare fabrics. Parents shoo their children inside at first sight, fearful of the degenerate creature behind the whips of the carriage, but those fears are forgotten as the riders of the caravan dismount to show wondrous wares and tell amazing tales...

BY SAM BROWN
BY KYLE HUNTER

As the days grow short and the sun hangs low in the sky, a caravan appears and travels the lands. It is greeted with wonder and amazement in each new city it visits, and each city is indeed new, for none welcome it back after it has left. This is the Dusklight Caravan, a trade convoy from under the earth. Its drivers and crew are derro, and they ply their trade in the night for things rare below, trading honestly when they arrive and taking by stealth anything they can't gain through trade.

The Dusklight Caravan trades for spices, craftwork unique to surface races, and masterwork wares and artwork that would be of interest to any merchant. As they trade, the caravan riders keep a keen eye out for items of even greater value: sages to be drugged and sold as fodder to their illithid patrons, children small enough to work as slaves alongside duregar, and items sacred to Pelor that might retain

their potency in the hands of a drow and serve against rivals in the Underdark.

The caravan is led by Brias Sjeltand, an illusion-loving sorcerer who holds the band together and keeps their murderous impulses in check long enough to do their work in each city. Other derro come and go, recruited by Brias each year as the season approaches, along with an assortment of guard dogs and occasional will-o'-wisps that attach themselves to the caravan in order to feed on the fear and suffering that travels with it. On average, the caravan contains 10 derro, 2 dogs, and 2d4 prisoners held sedated in the wagons. During the summer months, the caravan travels the Underdark, trading away wares it acquired in the lands above while waiting for the days to grow short again.

APPEARANCE

The caravan travels in two sturdy carriages decorated with motley fabrics and festive autumn leaves. The wheels of each carriage are reinforced with iron bands that allow them to survive a bouncing, hurried flight from a city, and are doubled up in case one shatters. The carriages have no windows, allowing the derro inside to safely sleep away the day. Drivers and other caravan members who must go out during daylight wear heavy cloaks to hold out the light, and keep their backs to the sun.

Arcane locks secure the doors of the carriages. Each of the crew is marked with Brias' *arcane mark*, allowing them to open the doors. Inside are hammocks, tightly packed goods, and stacked slave cages, their occupants dozing under heavy sedation. Like the carriage doors, the cages are enchanted with *arcane lock* and open only for bearers of Brias' mark.

TACTICS

Brias prefers the caravan flee rather than fight. If chased on the road, he uses illusions of suddenly appearing monsters or briar walls to spook his pursuers' mounts. Pursuers who charge through one illusionary barrier may find caltrops hidden under the next. The crewmembers open arrow slits in the rear of the carriage and fire on pursuers from cover, aiming for their enemies' mounts in order to winnow down the number in pursuit before attacking the remaining riders.

Caught in the open, the derro avoid a stand-up fight, preferring to send in fighting dogs while they hide, or running in different directions for a round before turning to fight. Pursued derro run while the rest keep up a barrage of crossbow fire. If they can land a handful of crossbow shots, the derro may flee until their poisons take effect. If Brias is involved, he makes extensive use of illusions to break line of sight, create fake ambushes, hide real ones, and create false allies to waste his opponents' efforts.

DEVELOPMENT

The caravan is an easy source of sinister complications, arriving just before the party to make off with the relics or scholars they seek. At other times the caravan may seem useful; Brias can fence or find a wide assortment of items, and offers the party lucrative jobs working for nameless patrons. Brias' favorite tricks include framing innocents for crimes so that he can buy them cheaply as slaves and disguising himself to recruit a party that has sworn enmity to him. He's recently acquired a *scroll of seeming*, and looks forward to using it to make his enemies fight each other.

The caravan works best as a recurring foil. Perhaps when characters first encounter the caravan, their conflicts are limited to the junior agents they can catch red-handed—as the scapegoats are replaced time and again, a confrontation with Brias grows unavoidable. The difficulty of confrontations with the caravan can be adjusted by which agents the party comes into conflict with; the caravan scales from EL 3 (a lone derro agent) to EL 11 (the whole caravan acting in unison).

For best results, Brias may escape repeatedly to harry the players another day. A silent, stilled *charm person* may bring mercy from an authority figure or gullible party member, or persuade one of his crew to offer himself up as a scapegoat for the good of the group. He uses stilled *knock* to escape bonds, and *disguise self* to slip past guards. Brias makes no effort to rescue his workers.

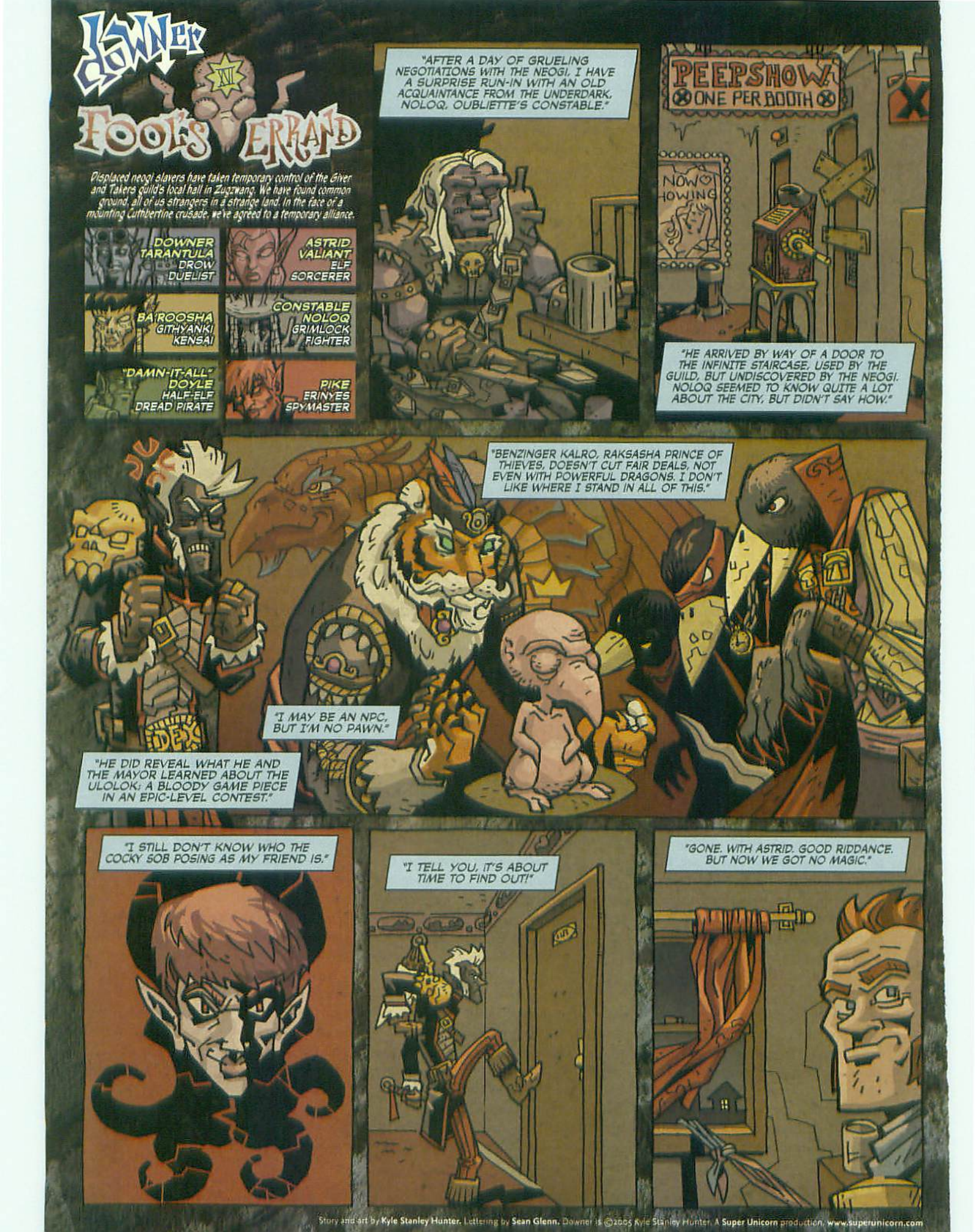
BRIAS SJELTAND **CR 8**

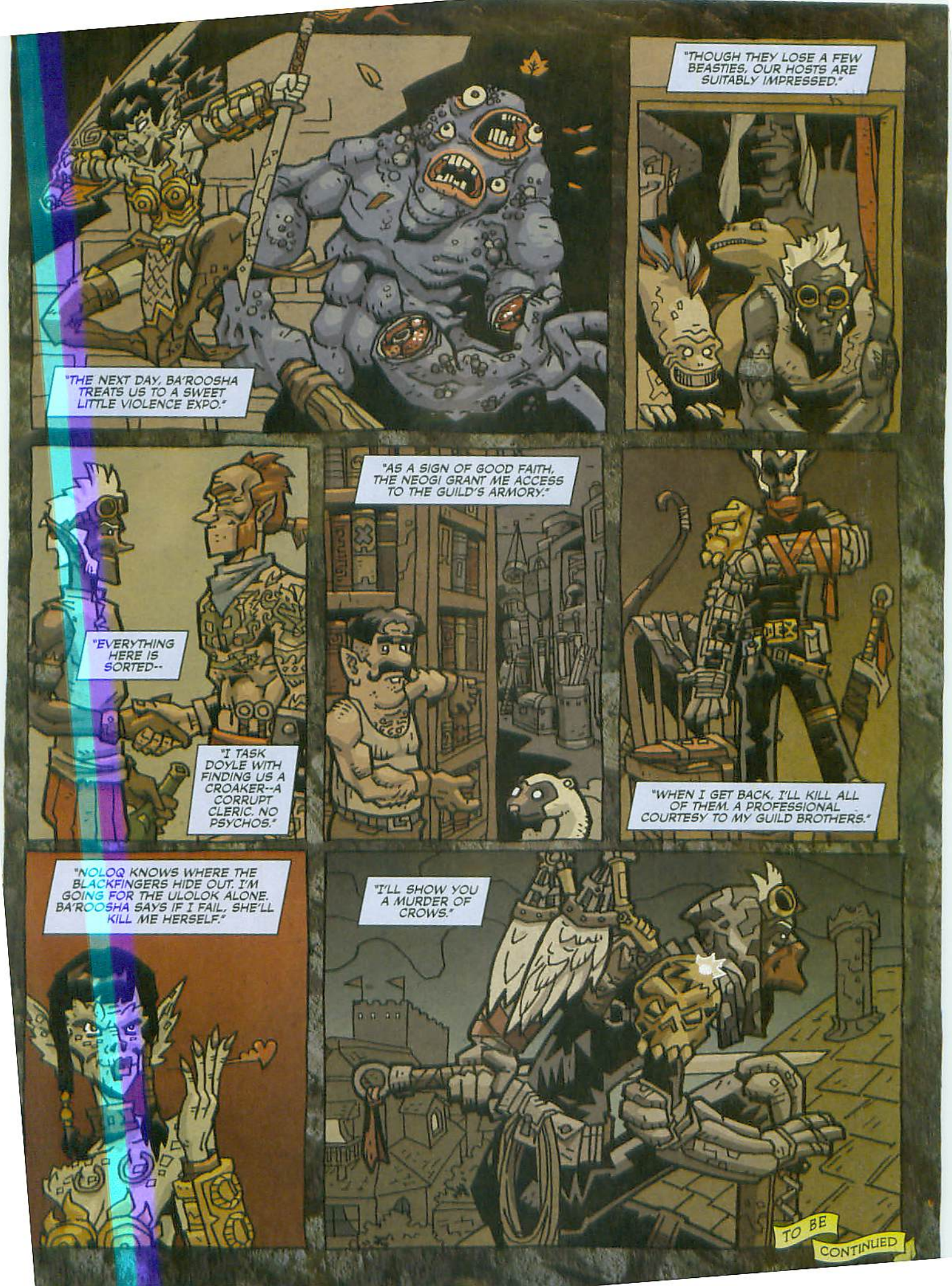
Male derro sorcerer 7
CE Small monstrous humanoid
Monster Manual 49
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft; Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common, Undercommon

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 13
hp 44 (10 HD)
Immune *confusion, insanity*
SR 15
Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +14
Weaknesses vulnerability to sunlight

Spd 20 ft.
Melee +1 *staff of enchantment* +6 (1d4)
Ranged mwk light repeating crossbow +7 (1d6/19–20)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +1
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear poison (Medium spider venom; Fortitude DC 14, 1d4 Str/1d4 Str), scroll of *seeming*, caltrops
Spells Known (CL 7th)
3rd (5/day)—*deep slumber* (DC 19), *major image* (DC 20)
2nd (8/day)—*arcane lock, invisibility, knock*
1st (8/day)—*charm person* (DC 17), *disguise self* (DC 18), *silent image* (DC 18), *sleep* (DC 17), *unseen servant*
0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, detect magic, detect poison, mending, light, message, read magic*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 3rd)
At will—*darkness, ghost sound* (DC 16)
1/day–*daze* (DC 16), *sound burst* (DC 18)

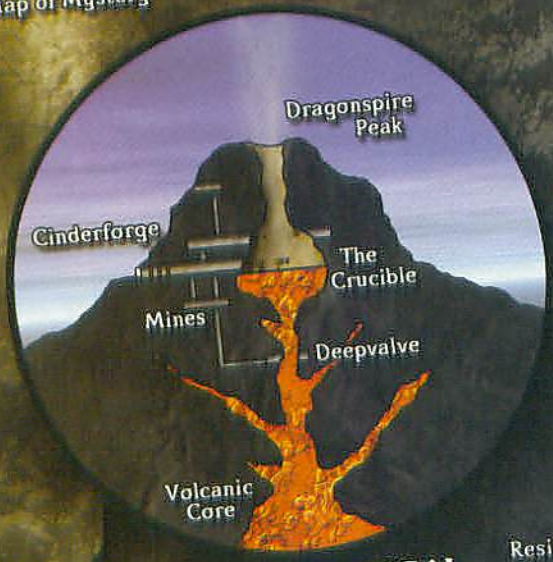
Abilities Str 8, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 22
SQ madness, summon familiar (toad named Wartmouth), vulnerability to sunlight
Feats Spell Focus (illusion), Silent Spell, Still Spell, Spell Penetration
Skills Bluff +19, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +6 (+8 to act in character), Hide +14, Intimidate +8, Move Silently +11
Possessions combat gear, +1 *staff of enchantment* (11 charges remaining), masterwork light repeating crossbow with 30 bolts, padded box for familiar, merchant's robes


DOWNER
XIV
FOOL'S ERRAND
Displaced neogi slavers have taken temporary control of the Giver and Takers guild's local hall in Zugzwang. We have found common ground, all of us strangers in a strange land. In the face of a mounting Cuthbertine crusade, we've agreed to a temporary alliance.
DOWNER TARANTULA DROW DUELIST
ASTRID VALIANT ELF SORCERER
BA'ROOSHA GITHYANKI KENSAI
CONSTABLE NOLOQ GRIMLOCK FIGHTER
"DAMN-IT-ALL" DOYLE HALF-ELF DREAD PIRATE
PIKE ERINYES SPYMASTER
"AFTER A DAY OF GRUELING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE NEOGI, I HAVE A SURPRISE RUN-IN WITH AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE FROM THE UNDERDARK, NOLOQ, OUBLIETTE'S CONSTABLE."
PEEPSHOW
ONE PER BOOTH
NOW SHOWING
"HE ARRIVED BY WAY OF A DOOR TO THE INFINITE STAIRCASE, USED BY THE GUILD, BUT UNDISCOVERED BY THE NEOGI. NOLOQ SEEMED TO KNOW QUITE A LOT ABOUT THE CITY, BUT DIDN'T SAY HOW."
"BENZINGER KALRO, RAKSASHA PRINCE OF THIEVES, DOESN'T CUT FAIR DEALS, NOT EVEN WITH POWERFUL DRAGONS. I DON'T LIKE WHERE I STAND IN ALL OF THIS."
"I MAY BE AN NPC, BUT I'M NO PAWN."
"HE DID REVEAL WHAT HE AND THE MAYOR LEARNED ABOUT THE ULOLOK: A BLOODY GAME PIECE IN AN EPIC-LEVEL CONTEST."
"I STILL DON'T KNOW WHO THE COCKY SOB POSING AS MY FRIEND IS."
"I TELL YOU, IT'S ABOUT TIME TO FIND OUT!"
"GONE. WITH ASTRID. GOOD RIDDANCE. BUT NOW WE GOT NO MAGIC."
Story and art by Kyle Stanley Hunter. Lettering by Sean Glenn. Downer is ©2005 Kyle Stanley Hunter. A Super Unicorn production. www.superunicorn.com


"THE NEXT DAY, BA'ROOSHA TREATS US TO A SWEET LITTLE VIOLENCE EXPO."
"THOUGH THEY LOSE A FEW BEASTIES, OUR HOSTS ARE SUITABLY IMPRESSED."
"EVERYTHING HERE IS SORTED--
"I TASK DOYLE WITH FINDING US A CROAKER--A CORRUPT CLERIC. NO PSYCHOS."
"AS A SIGN OF GOOD FAITH, THE NEOGI GRANT ME ACCESS TO THE GUILD'S ARMORY."
"WHEN I GET BACK, I'LL KILL ALL OF THEM. A PROFESSIONAL COURTESY TO MY GUILD BROTHERS."
"NOLOQ KNOWS WHERE THE BLACKFINGERS HIDE OUT. I'M GOING FOR THE ULOLOK ALONE. BA'ROOSHA SAYS IF I FAIL, SHE'LL KILL ME HERSELF."
"I'LL SHOW YOU A MURDER OF CROWS."
TO BE CONTINUED

CINDERFORGE

Map of Mystery



CROSS SECTION

Northgate

Pyroclastic Gates

North Commons

Noble Commons

Lifts to Observation Halls

Residence Halls

Royal Hall

Residence Halls

Lifts to Obsidian Mines

West Commons

Magma Forges

The Crucible

Westgate

Pyroclastic Gates

Ancestral Hall

1 square = 20 feet

WEST

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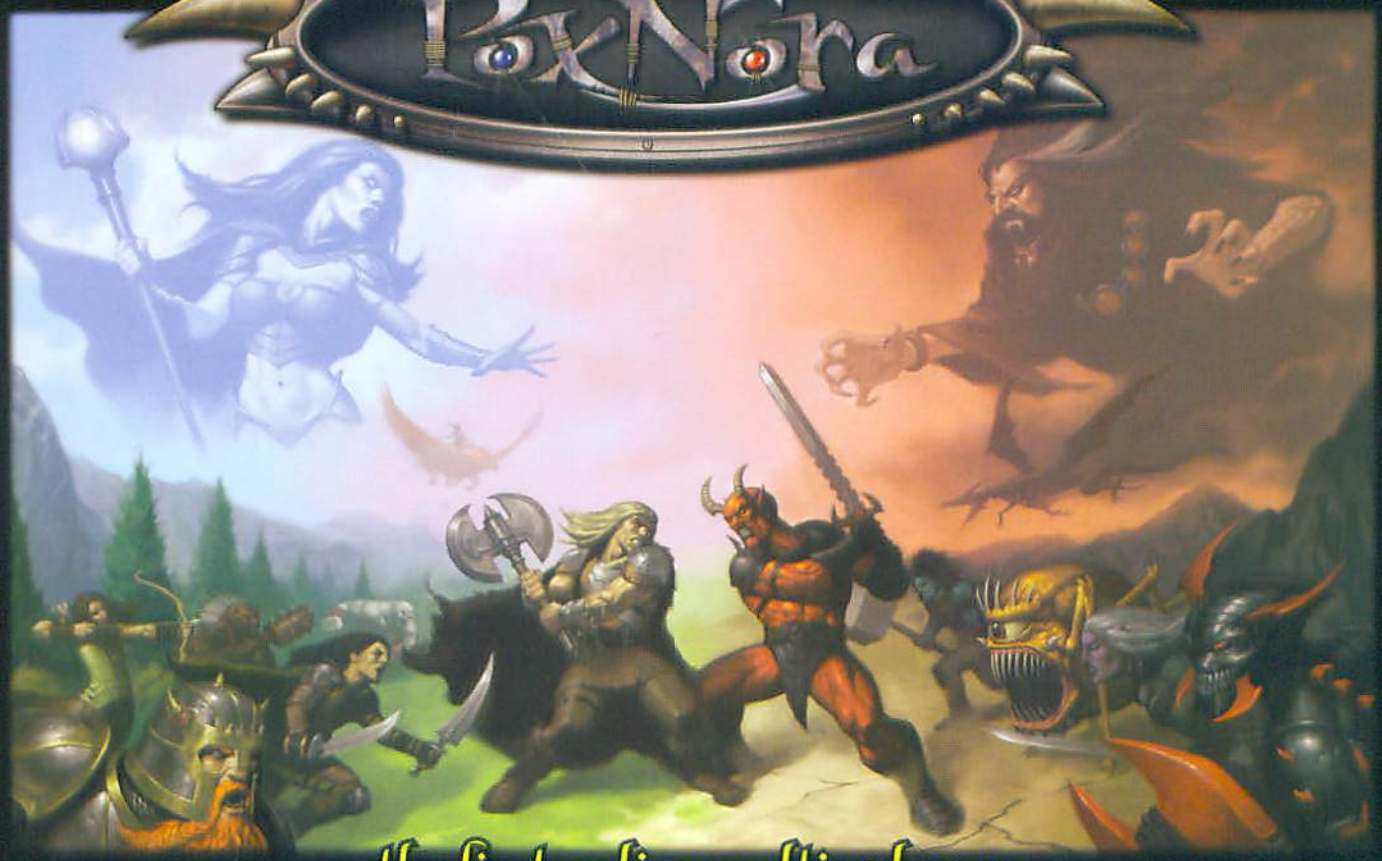
PoxNora



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